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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(AUTHORISED EDITION),

FOURTH SERIES.

FOURTH SESSION OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

3 EDWARD VII.

VOLUME CXXIII.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF MAY
TO THE NINETEENTH DAY OF JUNE, 1903.

SIXTH VOLUME OF SESSION.

1903.

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Chronology of "The Parliamentary Debates."

THE PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY contains all that can be collected of the Legislative History of this country from the Conquest to the close of the XVIIIth Century (1803), 36 vols. The chief sources whence these Debates are derived are the Constitutional History, 24 vols.; Sir Simonds D'Ewes' Journal; Debates of the Commons in 1620 and 1621; Chandler and Timberland's Debates, 22 vols.; Grey's Debates of the Commons, from 1667 to 1694, 10 vols.; Almon's Debates, 24 vols.; Debrett's Debates, 63 vols.; The Hardwicke Papers; Debates in Parliament by Dr. Johnson, &c., &c.

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TRADE DISPUTES BILL.—Petition from Mosley Common, in favour; to lie upon the Table 5

COLLEGE CHARTER ACT, 1871 (OWENS COLLEGE, MANCHESTER, AND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LIVERPOOL).—Paper (presented 26th May) to be printed. (No. 174.) 5

BOARD OF EDUCATION.—Copy presented, of (1) Associations constituted under The Voluntary Schools Act, 1897; (2) Associated Schools and amounts of Aid Grant paid; (3) Unassociated Schools and amounts of Aid Grant paid, 1902–3 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 5

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (AGRICULTURAL RETURNS).—Copy presented, of Agricultural Returns for Great Britain, with Statistics for the United Kingdom, British Possessions, and Foreign Countries for 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 5

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1899.—Copy presented, of Report by the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords and the Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons, under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, that they are of opinion that the provisions of the Scottish Central Electric Power Order, the Scottish Ontario and Manitoba Land Company, Limited, Order, and the Hutcheson's Hospital and Hutcheson's Educational Trust Order are of such a character that they ought to be dealt with by Private Bills and not by Provisional Orders [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 180.) 6

SUPERANNUATIONS.—Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 15th May, 1903, declaring that for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the office of Deputy Master and Controller of the Royal Mint, professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired in the Public Service are required [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 6

TRADE (FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND BRITISH POSSESSIONS).—Copy presented, of Annual Statement of the Trade of the United Kingdom with Foreign Countries and British Possessions for 1902. Volume II. [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 6

Papers laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House :—

CHARITABLE ENDOWMENTS (LONDON).—Further Return relative thereto (ordered 2nd August, 1894—*Mr. Francis Stevenson*); to be printed. (No. 181.) ... 6

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MEDWAY CONSERVANCY.—Copy of Statement of Receipts and Expenditure of the Conservators for the year ending 25th March, 1903 [by Act] 6

INTOXICATING LIQUORS (LICENCES REFUSED).—Address for "Return of the number of victuallers', beerhouse, and other licences for the sale of intoxicating liquors, the renewal of which has been refused at the general annual licensing meetings and adjournments thereof held in England and Wales during February and March, 1903, showing in each case the ground of the refusal, especially where such ground was in any instance that the licence was not required; with the number of cases in which notice of appeal was given, and the result of such appeal (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 141, of the present Session of 1903)."—(*Mr. Cochrane.*) ... 7

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION.—Copy ordered, "of Statistical Tables relating to Emigration and Immigration from and into the United Kingdom in the year 1902, and Report to the Board of Trade thereon."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*) 7

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

IRISH REPRESENTATION ON TRADES DISPUTES COMMISSION.—Question, Mr. Nannetti (Dublin, College Green); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 7

PAYMENT OF PIECEWORKERS.—Question, Mr. Hunter Craig (Lanarkshire, Govan); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 7

ARTIFICIAL SEWAGE SCHEMES.—Question, Mr. John Wilson (Durham, Mid); Answer, Mr. Walter Long 8

INFECTED ARMY BLANKETS.—Question, Mr. Yoxall (Nottingham, W.); Answer, Mr. Walter Long 8

ANGLESEY EDUCATION SCHEME.—Question, Mr. Ellis Griffith (Anglesey); Answer, Sir William Anson 9

ILLEGAL TRAWLING IN RED WHARF BAY.—Question, Mr. Ellis Griffith; Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 9

ALLEGED GRIEVANCES OF POSTAL TELEGRAPH CLERKS.—Question, Captain Norton (Newington, W.); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 10

FOREIGN TOBACCO IMPORTED INTO INDIA—PROPOSED DUTY.—Question, Sir Mancherjee Bhownaggree (Bethnal Green, N.E.); Answer, Lord George Hamilton 11

PLAGUE IN INDIA—INOCULATION.—Question, Mr. Weir (Ross and Cromarty); Answer, Lord George Hamilton 11

SOMALILAND CAMPAIGN—AGREEMENTS WITH ITALY AND ABYSSINIA.—Question, Mr. Labouchere (Northampton); Answer, Lord Cranborne 11

TREATIES BETWEEN PERSIA AND GREAT BRITAIN.—Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, Lord Cranborne 12

IMPROVEMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN IRELAND.—Question, Mr. John Murphy (Kerry, W.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 12

PRIMARY EDUCATION IN IRELAND.—Question, Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 13

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EVICTED TENANTS IN COUNTY WATERFORD.—Question, Mr. O'Shee (Waterford, W.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 13

WAR REWARDS -CASE OF MR. A. J. VOGAN.—Question, Mr. Ellis Griffith; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 13

ARREST OF THE MINISTER AT RUSTENBERG.—Question, Sir Wilfrid Lawson (Cumberland, Cockermouth); Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 14

CHINESE LABOUR IN THE TRANSVAAL MINES.—Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 14

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

DESTRUCTION OF ARMY RATIONS IN THE TRANSVAAL.—Questions, Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E); Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford) 14

DISEASE INFECTED BLANKETS FROM SOUTH AFRICA.—Question, Mr. Mansfield (Lincolnshire, Spalding); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 15

IMPERIAL YEOMANRY.—Question, Mr. Mansfield; Answer, Mr. Brodrick ... 16

SCOTTISH HORSE MUTINEERS.—Question, Mr. Weir (Ross and Cromarty); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 16

SOMALILAND — BEHAVIOUR OF NATIVE TROOPS.—Question, Mr. Lambert (Devonshire, South Molton); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 17

NAVAL MEDICAL AND ACCOUNTANT OFFICERS.—Question, Mr. Carew (Meath, S.); Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Arnold-Forster, Belfast, W.) 17

LORD MILNER.—Question, Mr. John Ellis (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe); Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. J. Chamberlain, Birmingham, W.) 17

TRANSVAAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.—Question, Mr. Lambert; Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 18

DISTURBANCES IN EASTERN ROUMELIA.—Question, Mr. Trevelyan (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland); Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Lord Cranborne, Rochester) 18

FINANCE—DUTIES ON COLONIAL PRODUCE.—Question, Mr. Lambert; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Ritchie, Croydon) 18

GAMBLING IN GRAIN—TAXES ON OPTIONS.—Question, Mr. Patrick O'Brien (Kilkenny); Answer, Mr. Ritchie 19

VIVISECTION IN THE METROPOLIS.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Akers Douglas, Kent, St. Augustine's) 19

BRISTOL POST OFFICE SPORTS—MOTOR FATALITY.—Questions, Mr. Mansfield and Mr. Scott Montagu (Hampshire, New Forest); Answers, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Walter Long, Bristol, S.) 19

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IRISH CATTLE TRADE LOSSES.—Question, Mr. Schwann (Manchester, N.); Answer, Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey)... 21

REGULATION OF IRISH CATTLE TRADE.—Question, Mr. Schwann; Answer, Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes 21

MERCANTILE MARINE—FISHERMEN AND SIR EDWARD FRY'S AWARD.—Question, Mr. Doughty (Great Grimsby); Answer, The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade (Mr. Bonar Law, Glasgow, Blackfriars) ... 22

AVOCH (ROSS-SHIRE) CHANNEL LIGHTS.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, Mr. Bonar Law 23

HIGHLAND TWEEDS AT THE ST. LOUIS EXHIBITION.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, The Solicitor-General for Scotland (Mr. Scott Dickson, Glasgow, Bridgton) 23

OLIVER CROMWELL'S BUST.—Questions, Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton) and Mr. MacVeagh (Down, S.); Answers, Mr. Victor Cavendish (Derbyshire, W.) 23

GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS — RETURN. — Question, Mr. Trevelyan; Answer, The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Arthur Elliot, Durham) 24

BELFAST VALUATION APPEALS.—Question, Mr. James O'Connor (Wicklow, W.); Answer, The Attorney-General for Ireland (Mr. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.) 24

O'CALLAGHAN'S MILLS (COUNTY CLARE) POST OFFICE.—Question, Mr. William Redmond; Answer, The Postmaster-General (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.) 24

WICKLOW HARBOUR.—Question, Mr. James O'Connor; Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 25

IRISH INDUSTRIES AT THE ST. LOUIS EXHIBITION.—Question, Mr. William Redmond; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) 25

BELFAST FLOODS.—Questions, Mr. MacVeagh; Answer, Mr. Wyndham ... 26

ENNIS POLICE AND MR. CASEY.—Question, Mr. William Redmond; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 26

MOTOR-CAR RACES IN IRELAND.—Questions, Mr. Trevelyan and Mr. Scott Montagu; Answers, Mr. Wyndham 26

BELFAST AND RATHFRILAND TRAIN SERVICE.—Question, Mr. MacVeagh; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 27

IRISH LAND PURCHASE ADVANCES.—Question, Mr. T. W. Russell (Tyrone, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 27

QUESTIONS.—Question, Mr. Mansfield; Answer, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 28

MILITARY AND NAVAL WORKS BILL.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 28

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—Questions, Mr. Bryce (Aberdeen, S.), Sir Albert Rollit (Islington, S.), Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis), and Mr. T. W. Russell; Answers, Mr. A. J. Balfour... 28

Electric Lighting (London) Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 16th June, and to be printed. (Bill 223.) ... 30

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.—Fifth Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 30

Medical Act (1858) Amendment Bill.—Order for Second Reading (8th June) read and discharged. Bill withdrawn 30

Medical Act (1886) Amendment Bill.—Order for Second Reading (8th June) read and discharged. Bill withdrawn 30

NEW BILLS.

Metropolitan Improvements (Funds) Bill.—"To authorise the appropriation of the surplus Funds derived from Battersea Park towards the opening of the Mall into Charing Cross, and other Metropolitan Improvements," presented by Mr. Arthur Elliot; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. (Bill 224.) 30

Patent Office Extension Bill.—"For the acquisition of Land for the further Extension of the Patent Office, and for purposes connected therewith," presented by Mr. Arthur Elliot; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. (Bill 225.) 30

Married Women's Property Act (1882) Amendment Bill.—"To amend the Married Women's Property Act of 1882," presented by Mr. Kimber; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. (Bill 226.) ... 30

Town Councils (Scotland) Bill.—"To amend The Town Councils (Scotland) Act, 1900," presented by Mr. Asher; supported by Sir Robert Reid, Mr. Parker Smith, Colonel Denny, and Mr. Crombie; to be read a second time upon Friday, 26th June, and to be printed. (Bill 227.) 30

Port of London Bill.—Lords Message (19th May) relative to the Port of London Bill considered.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade (Mr. Bonar Law, Glasgow, Blackfriars) 31
Mr. John Ellis (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe) 31

Ordered, That the Port of London Bill be committed to a Select Committee of five Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection to be joined with a Committee of Lords.

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

Ordered, That all Petitions against the Bill presented on or before the 11th day of June, 1903, be referred to the Committee; that the Petitioners praying to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, or Witnesses be heard against the Bill, and Counsel heard in support of the Bill.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That three be the Quorum.—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*)

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Municipal Trading.—Lords Message (5th May), relating to the appointment of a Joint Committee on Municipal Trading, considered.

Sir A. Acland-Hood (Somersetshire, Wellington) ... 32
Mr. Whitley (Halifax) ... 33
Sir Albert Rollit (Islington, S.) ... 33
Mr. Henry Hobhouse (Somersetshire, E.) ... 35
Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis) ... 35
Sir A. Acland-Hood ... 36
Mr. Coghill (Stoke-upon-Trent) ... 36

Ordered, That a Select Committeee of seven Members be appointed to join with a Committee to be appointed by the Lords to consider and report as to the principles which should govern powers given by Bills and Provisional Orders to municipal and other local authorities for industrial enterprise within or without the area of their jurisdiction.

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

Sir George Bartley, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Platt-Higgins, Mr. Powell-Williams, Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, and Sir James Woodhouse, nominated members of the Committee.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That three be the Quorum.—(*Sir A. Acland-Hood.*)

Education (Borrowing) Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Jeffreys (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

Clause 1.

Mr. Gardner (Berkshire, Wokingham) ... 37

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 7, after '1902,' to insert the words 'or in such other manner as that Board may approve.'"—(*Mr. Gardner.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The President of the Local Government Board (Mr Walter Long, Bristol, S.) ... 39
Sir Albert Rollit (Islington, S.) ... 39
Mr. J. A. Pease (Essex, Saffron Walden) ... 40
Mr. Henry Hobhouse (Somersetshire, E.) ... 40
Mr. Brigg (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley) ... 41
Sir John Gorst (Cambridge University) ... 41
Mr. Yoxall (Nottingham, W.) ... 42
Mr. Hardy (Kent, Ashford) ... 43
Sir E. Durning-Lawrence (Cornwall, Truro) ... 43
Mr. Walter Long ... 43
Mr. Lloyd-George (Carnarvon Boroughs) ... 43
Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice (Wiltshire, Cricklade) ... 44
Mr. Humphreys-Owen (Montgomeryshire) ... 45
Mr. Stevenson (Suffolk, Eye) ... 45
Sir Charles Welby (Nottinghamshire, Newark) ... 45
Mr. Alfred Hutton (Yorkshire, W.R., Morley) ... 46

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Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Alfred Hutton 47

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 9, after the word 'effect,' to insert the words 'but such sums shall not be applied to the purposes of repairing any schoolhouse, and shall be used exclusively for the purposes of maintenance.'"—(*Mr. Alfred Hutton.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Sir John Gorst 47
Mr. Lloyd-George 48

Proposed Amendment amended—

"By leaving out the words 'repairing any schoolhouse,' and inserting the words 'paying for such repairs in the schoolhouse as may be effected or paid for by the local education authority.'"—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

Mr. Walter Long 48

Question put, "That those words as amended be there inserted."

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 87 ; Noes, 151. (Division List No. 109.)

Bill reported as amended, to be considered upon Monday, 8th June.

RAILWAYS (ELECTRICAL POWER) EXPENSES.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Motion made, "That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of the remuneration of any persons appointed by the Board of Trade for the purposes of any Act of the present session to facilitate the introduction and use of Electric Power on Railways, and any other expenses incurred by the Board of Trade in carrying such Act into effect."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*)

Mr. Whitley (Halifax) 51
Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis) 52
Mr. Channing (Northamptonshire, E.) 54
The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade (Mr. Bonar Law, Glasgow, Blackfriars) 54
Sir Albert Rollit 54
Mr. Whitley 54

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of the remuneration of any persons appointed by the Board of Trade for the purposes of any Act of the present session to facilitate the introduction and use of Electric Power on Railways, and any other expenses incurred by the Board of Trade in carrying such Act in effect.—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*)

Resolution to be reported upon Monday, 8th June.

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Local Government (Transfer of Powers) Bill.—As amended (by the Standing Committee) considered.

Mr. Humphreys-Owen (Montgomery) 55

Amendment proposed to the Bill—

"In page 1, line 15, to leave out Sub-section (3) of Clause 1."—(*Mr. Humphreys-Owen.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill."

Sir Albert Rollit 56
Mr. Channing 56
Mr. T. W. Russell (Tyrone, S.) 56
Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice (Wiltshire, Cricklade)... 57
The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Walter Long, Bristol, S.) 58
Mr. Helme (Lancashire, Lancaster) 59
Mr. Edwards (Radnorshire) 59
Mr Courtenay Warner (Staffordshire, Lichfield)... 60
Mr. J. H. Lewis (Flint Boroughs) 60
Mr. Humphreys-Owen 60

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

SUPPLY [21ST MAY, EVENING SITTING].

Resolution reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903–4.—CLASS III.

"That a sum, not exceeding £375,897, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the expenses of the prisons in England, Wales, and the Colonies."

Mr. Whitley (Halifax) 61
Mr. Caldwell (Lanarkshire, Mid) 61
The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Cochrane, Ayrshire, N.)... 62

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [22ND APRIL].

Resolution reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903–4.—CLASS II.

"That a sum, not exceeding £139,395, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Office of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade and Subordinate Departments, including a Grant in Aid."

Resolution read a second time.

Mr. Gibson Bowles (*Lynn Regis*) 62
Sir Albert Rollit (*Islington, S.*) 63
Mr. Caldwell 63
Mr. Bonar Law 63

Further consideration of Resolution postponed till Monday, 8th June.

SUPPLY [21ST APRIL, AFTERNOON SITTING] REPORT.

Order read, for further consideration of Twelfth Resolution, "That a sum, not exceeding £48,288, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Board of Agriculture, and for Kew Botanic and Pleasure Gardens, including certain Grants in Aid."

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [14TH MAY, AFTERNOON SITTING].

Resolution reported.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1903–4.

Section 1. "That a sum, not exceeding £2,991,800, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expenses of the *Personnel* for Shipbuilding, Repairs, Maintenance, &c., including the cost of Establishments of Dockyards and Naval Yards at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [14TH MAY, EVENING SITTING].

Resolution reported.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1903–4.

Section 2. "That a sum not exceeding £4,786,700, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of the *Matériel* for Shipbuilding, Repairs, Maintenance, &c., including the cost of Establishments of Dockyards and Naval Yards at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

Mr. Gibson Bowles 64

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Resolution be re-committed to Committee of Supply."

The Civil Lord of the Admiralty (*Mr. Pretyman, Suffolk, Woodbridge*) ... 65

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Resolution agreed to.

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SUPPLY [21ST MAY, AFTERNOON SITTING].

Resolutions reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903–4.—CLASS III.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £180,118, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for such of the Salaries and Expenses of the Supreme Court of Judicature as are not charged on the Consolidated Fund."
2. "That a sum, not exceeding £28,144, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Office of the Land Registry."
3. "That a sum, not exceeding £25,000, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Salaries and Expenses connected with the County Courts."
4. "That a sum, not exceeding £26,390, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Salaries of the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police, and of the Receiver for the Metropolitan Police District, the Pay and Expenses of Officers of Metropolitan Police employed on special duties, and the Salaries and Expenses of the Inspectors of Constabulary."

Resolutions agreed to.

PUBLIC OFFICES (DUBLIN) (ADVANCES).

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it is expedient to authorise the issue out of the Consolidated Fund of such sums, not exceeding in the whole £225,000, as may be required for the purposes of any Act of the present session for the acquisition of certain land in Dublin, and for the erection and equipment of a Royal College of Science and other buildings for the public service, and to authorise the Treasury, for the purpose of providing for the issue and repayment of such sums, to borrow money by means of Terminable Annuities for a period not exceeding thirty years, such annuities to be paid out of moneys to be provided by Parliament for the service of the Commissioners, and if those moneys are insufficient, out of the Consolidated Fund."—(*Mr. Arthur Elliot.*)

Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.) 67
The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Arthur Elliot, Durham) ... 67
Mr. Buchanan (Perthshire, E.) 67
Mr. Mooney (Dublin County, S.) 68
Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.) 68
Mr. Buchanan 69
Sir John Gorst (Cambridge University) 69
Mr. Arthur Elliot 70

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Mr. William Redmond 70
Mr. Herbert Samuel (*Yorkshire, Cleveland*) 71
Mr. T. W. Russell (*Tyrone, S.*) 71
Sir George Bartley (*Islington, N.*) 71
Mr. Toulmin (*Lancashire, Bury*) 72
Mr. Buchanan 73

Resolved: That it is expedient to authorise the issue, out of the Consolidated Fund, of such sums, not exceeding in the whole £225,000, as may be required for the purposes of any Act of the present session for the acquisition of certain land in Dublin, and for the erection and equipment of a Royal College of Science and other buildings for the public service, and to authorise the Treasury, for the purpose of providing for the issue and repayment of such sums, to borrow money by means of Terminable Annuities for a period not exceeding thirty years, such annuities to be paid out of moneys to be provided by Parliament for the service of the Commissioners, and if those moneys are insufficient out of the Consolidated Fund.

Resolution to be reported upon Monday, 8th June.

Marine Store Dealers (Ireland) Bill—[SECOND READING].

The Attorney-General for Ireland (*Mr. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.*) ... 73

Bill read a second time, and committed for Wednesday, 10th June.

ROYAL COMMISSIONS AND SELECT COMMITTEES (COST).—Return ordered, "Showing the annual cost to the country of Royal Commissions and Select Committees, respectively, appointed since the year 1892."—(*Mr. Malcolm*)... 74

And, there being no further business set down for the Afternoon Sitting, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair till this Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

HOUSE OF LORDS (VETO).

Mr. Cremer (*Shoreditch, Haggerston*) 74
Mr. Labouchere (*Northampton*) 79

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the power now possessed by the House of Lords to veto any measure adopted by the House of Commons should be limited to one session of Parliament."—(*Mr. Cremer.*)

Sir Frederick Banbury (*Camberwell, Peckham*) 84
Mr. Duke (*Plymouth*) 85
Mr. Cawley (*Lancashire, Prestwich*) 86
Mr. Purvis (*Peterborough*) 87
Mr. Charles Hobhouse (*Bristol, E.*) 88
Sir Elliott Lees (*Birkenhead*) 89
Mr. Osmond Williams (*Merionethshire*) 91
The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (*Mr. Arthur Elliot, Durham*) ... 91

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 62; Noes, 118. (Division List No. 110.)

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Small Holdings (Scotland) Bill—[SECOND READING].

Mr. Black (*Banffshire*) 95

Notice taken that forty Members were not present; House counted, and forty Members not being present——

The House was adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Twelve of the Clock till To-morrow.

Adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: THURSDAY, 28TH MAY, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Railway Bill.—Read the third time, and passed. (New Title.) 97

Great Southern and Western Railway Bill; Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland Bill; Mullingar, Kells, and Drogheda Railway Bill; Plymouth Corporation Bill; Woolwich Borough Council Bill. Read the third time and passed 97

Exeter Railway Bill [LORDS].—(Not amended); considered; to be read the third time 97

Lanarkshire and Dumbartonshire Railway Bill; Middlesbrough Corporation Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time ... 97

PRIVATE BILLS, ETC.—Ordered, That Standing Orders 39, 129, and 230 be suspended, and that the time for depositing Petitions and Memorials against Private Bills, or against any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate, and for depositing duplicates of any Documents relating to any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate, also for depositing at the Private Bill Office all Documents relating to any Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the Recess.—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means.*) 97

CALEDONIAN RAILWAY ORDER CONFIRMATION.—Bill to confirm a Provisional Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to the Caledonian Railway, ordered to be brought in by The Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor-General for Scotland.

Caledonian Railway Order Confirmation Bill.—"To confirm a Provisional Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to the Caledonian Railway," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 9th June, and to be printed. (Bill 228.) 97

FORTH NAVIGATION ORDER CONFIRMATION.—Bill to confirm a Provisional Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to the Forth Navigation, ordered to be brought in by The Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor-General for Scotland.

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Forth Navigation Order Confirmation Bill.—"To confirm a Provisional Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to the Forth Navigation," presented; and ordered to be considered upon Monday, 8th June 98

Thames Conservancy Bill.—Order (24th February) for Second Reading read, and discharged. Bill withdrawn 98

Patent Office Extension Bill.—Ordered, That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Patent Office Extension Bill with respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bills.—(*Mr. Arthur Elliot.*) 98

Merthyr Tydvil Urban District Council Bill.—Reported from the Police and Sanitary Committee, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 98

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Ecclesiastical Commissioners Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 10th June, and to be printed. (Bill 231.) 135

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Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make provision for giving effect to a Convention signed on the fifth day of March, nineteen hundred and two, in relation to Sugar."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*)

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And, the Motion being opposed, after a brief explanatory statement from the Member who made the Motion and from a Member who opposed it, Mr. Speaker put the Question in pursuance of Standing Order No. 11.

The House divided:—Ayes, 142; Noes, 82. (Division List No. 111.)

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Gerald Balfour and Mr. Bonar Law.

Sugar Convention Bill.—"To make provision for giving effect to a Convention signed on the 5th day of March, 1902, in relation to Sugar," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday, 8th June, and to be printed. (Bill 230.)

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Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn until Monday, 8th June.—(*Sir A. Acland Hood.*)

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Adjourned at a quarter after Seven o'clock till Monday, 8th June.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: MONDAY, 8TH JUNE, 1903.

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Blackheath and Greenwich District Electric Light Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 205

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Wolverhampton and Cannock Chase Railway (Extension of Time) Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 205

Beckenham Urban District Council Bill; Cleveland and Durham County Electric Power Bill [Lords]. — As amended, considered; to be read the third time 205

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Grindleford, Baslow, and Bakewell Railway Bill; Hainault Forest Bill; Harrow and Stanmore Gas Bill [Lords]; India Rubber, Gutta Percha, and Telegraph Works Company Bill [Lords]; London County Council (Money) Bill; Milford Docks Bill [Lords]; Neath, Pontardawe, and Brynamman Railway Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time ... 205

North-Eastern Railway Bill.—As amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time 205

Romford and District Tramways Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 206

South Wales Mineral Railway Bill [LORDS].—[Not amended]; considered; to be read the third time 206

Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Bill [LORDS]; Wellington (Salop) Gas Bill [Lords]; Wood Green Urban District Council Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 206

Dudley, Stourbridge, and District Tramways Bill [LORDS]; Scunthorpe Urban District Water Bill [Lords]; Shepshed Urban Gas Bill [Lords]; Somerset and District Electric Power Bill [Lords].—Read a second time, and committed 206

Forth Navigation Order Confirmation Bill.—Considered; to be read the third time upon Wednesday 206

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 2).—Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Dawlish, Bude, and Sandown. Ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour.

Ordered, That Standing Order 193A be suspended, and that the Bill be read the first time.

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Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.—"To confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Dawlish, Bude, and Sandown," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 233.] 206

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 3).—Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Aultbea and Pennan. Ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour.

Ordered, That Standing Order 193A be suspended, and that the Bill be read the first time.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill.—"To confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Aultbea and Pennan," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 234.] 206

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 4).—Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Sligo, Limerick, and Dundalk. Ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour.

Ordered, That Standing Order 193A be suspended, and that the Bill be read the first time.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill.—"To confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Sligo, Limerick and Dundalk," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 235.] 207

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 5).—Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Boscombe and Bournemouth, Carnarvon, Gorleston, Herne Bay, and Avoch. Ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour.

Ordered, That Standing Order 193A be suspended, and that the Bill be read the first time.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill.—"To confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Boscombe and Bournemouth, Carnarvon, Gorleston, Herne Bay, and Avoch," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 236.] 207

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 6).—Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Truro and Salen (Mull). Ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour.

Ordered, That Standing Order 193A be suspended, and that the Bill be read the first time.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill.—"To confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Truro and Salen (Mull)," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 237.] 208

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BURGH POLICE (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Hawick, for alteration; to lie upon the Table 208

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.—Petition from East Dulwich, against; to lie upon the Table 208

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petition from Isle of Wight, in favour; to lie upon the Table 208

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL.—Petitions against; from Stockton-on-Tees; and Leicester; to lie upon the Table 208

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL, AND LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.—Petition from Oldham, against; to lie upon the Table 208

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.—Petition from Stockton-on-Tees, against; to lie upon the Table 209

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petition from Leith, for alteration; to lie upon the Table 209

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PORT OF LONDON BILL.—Petitions against (praying to be heard by Counsel): from Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress; Wandsworth and Putney Gas Light and Coke Company; Commissioners of Sewers for Lombard's Wall to Gravesend Bridge; Public Wharfingers and others in the Port of London; Commissioners of Sewers for the Havering and Rainham and other levels; Commissioners of Sewers from Gravesend Bridge to Sheerness; Company of Proprietors of the Grand Junction Canal; Kent and Essex Brickmasters' and Flint Merchants' Protection Association; Commissioners of Sewers for the levels of Fobbing and other places; Association of Master Lightermen and Bargeowners of the Port of London; and William Cory and Son, Limited; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill 209

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL.—Petitions in favour: from Kettering; Droylsden; King's Lynn; Springburn; Harleston; and Broxbourne; to lie upon the Table 209

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.—Petition from Gillingham, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table 209

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA (TAXATION OF NATIVES).—Return [presented 28th May] to be printed. [No. 184.] 209

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS (WHITSUNTIDE RECESS).—The following Papers, presented by Command of His Majesty during the Whitsuntide recess, were delivered to the Librarian of the House of Commons during the recess, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 14th August, 1896:—

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TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).—Copies of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2987 to 2990 210

TREATY SERIES (No. 8, 1903).—Copy of Protocol between the United Kingdom and the United States of Venezuela relating to the settlement of British Claims and other matters; signed at Washington, 13th February, 1903; together with agreements for the reference of certain questions to the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague, and for the decision of the claims by a Mixed Commission; signed at Washington, 7th May, 1903 ... 210

COLONIES.—Copy of Papers relating to the Investigation of Malaria and other Tropical Diseases, and the Establishment of Schools of Tropical Medicine 210

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS (IRELAND).—Copy of Agricultural Statistics of Ireland, with detailed Report for the year 1902 210

PUBLIC RECORDS.—Copy of Sixty-fourth Annual Report of the Deputy-Keeper of the Public Records 210

EXPLOSIVES.—Copy of Twenty-seventh Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspectors of Explosives, being for the year 1902.

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CORPORAL PUNISHMENT.—Return presented, relative thereto [Address 7th May—*Mr. Lloyd Morgan*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 185.] 210

EXPERIMENTS ON LIVING ANIMALS.—Return presented, relative thereto [Address 26th May—*Mr. Cochrane*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 186.] 211

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF SURREY).—Copy presented, of Order made by the County Council of the County of Surrey, ordering that a second polling place be provided for the Parish of Godstone at Blindley Heath [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 211

ALKALI, ETC., WORKS REGULATION ACTS, 1881 AND 1892.—Copy presented, of Thirty-ninth Annual Report on Alkali, etc., Works by the Chief Inspector, being for 1902 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 187.] 211

DUBLIN METROPOLITAN POLICE.—Copy presented, of Statistical Tables for the year 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 211

CONGESTED DISTRICTS BOARD (IRELAND).—Copy presented, of Twelfth Report of the Board, being for the year ending 31st March, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 211

INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION (IRELAND).—Copy presented, of Rule made by the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland appointing the places at which examinations shall be held for 1903 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table ... 211

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (RULES).—Copy presented, of Rule made by the Irish Land Commission as to Assistant Commissioners, dated the 18th May, 1903 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 211

STRIKES AND LOCK-OUTS.—Copy presented, of Report by the Chief Labour Correspondent on the Strikes and Lock-outs of 1902, and on Conciliation and Arbitration Boards [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 211

Emigration and Immigration.—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 27th May—*Mr. Bonar Law*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 188.] 211

Inebriates Act, 1898, Prisons (Scotland) Act, 1877, and Secretary for Scotland Acts, 1885–1889.—Copy presented, of Rule made by the Secretary for Scotland as to the appointment of a visiting Committee to the State Inebriate Reformatory at Perth [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 212

South Africa.—Copy presented, of Draft Customs Union Convention agreed to by representatives of the British Colonies and territories in South Africa at a Conference at Bloemfontein in March, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 212

Aliens (Naturalisation) Transvaal and Orange River Colony.—Return presented, relative thereto [Address 20th May—*Mr. John Ellis*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 189.] 212

Victoria (The Constitution Act, 1903).—Copy presented, of the Constitution Act, 1903 (Victoria) [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 190.] 212

National Portrait Gallery.—Copy presented, of Forty-sixth Annual Report of the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery, 1902–3 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 212

London County Council.—Copy presented, of Returns relating to the Council up to 31st March, 1903, with Estimate of Expenditure for the year ending 31st March, 1904 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 191] 212

Imperial Institute Account.—Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 26th May, 1903, directing that the Imperial Institute Account shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 212

Superannuations.—Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 23rd May, 1903, declaring that for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the office of Third Assistant to the Chief Crown Solicitor for Ireland, professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired in Public Service are required [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 212

Superannuation Act, 1884.—Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 13th May, 1903, declaring that Joseph Woolverton, Royal Laboratory, War Office, was appointed without a Civil Service certificate, through inadvertence on the part of the Head of his Department [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 213

Paper laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House:—

Local Loans Fund.—Accounts of the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt in respect of the capital and income of the Local Loans Fund for the year ended 31st March, 1902; with report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to be printed. [No. 192.] 213

Irish Land Bill.—Return ordered, "giving the text of the Enactments to which reference is made in the Irish Land Bill."—(*Mr. Wyndham.*) ... 213

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PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 1) BILL [LORDS].—Copy ordered, "of Memorandum stating the nature of the proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [Lords]."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*) 213

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2) BILL.—Copy ordered, "of Memorandum stating the nature of the proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*) 213

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 3) BILL.—Copy ordered, "of Memorandum stating the nature of the proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*) 214

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 4) BILL.—Copy ordered, "of Memorandum stating the nature of the proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*) 214

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 5) BILL.—Copy ordered, "of Memorandum stating the nature of the proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*) 214

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 6) BILL.—Copy ordered, "of Memorandum stating the nature of the proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*) 214

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

NEW WORKHOUSE AT TETBURY.—Question, Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice (Wiltshire, Cricklade); Answer, Mr. Walter Long 214

RATES IN SUPPORT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS.—Question, Mr. J. H. Lewis (Flint Boroughs); Answer, Sir William Anson 215

BRITISH RIGHTS IN SOUTHERN PERSIA.—Question, Mr. Labouchere (Northampton); Answer, Lord Cranborne 215

CHINESE AND BLACK LABOUR IN THE TRANSVAAL MINES.—Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 216

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

SALE OF WAR STORES—DISEASE INFECTED BLANKETS.—Questions, Sir Thomas Dewar (Tower Hamlets, St. George's); Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford) 216

DISCARDED MILITARY TENTS.—Question, Sir Thomas Dewar; Answer, Mr. Brodrick... 218

JOHN BRIGHT'S STATUE.—Question, Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton); Answer, Mr. Victor Cavendish (Derbyshire, W.) 218

WORN SILVER COINAGE.—Questions, Sir John Leng (Dundee) and Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis); Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Ritchie, Croydon) 219

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ALIEN CRIMINALS.—Questions, Sir Howard Vincent (Sheffield, Central); Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Akers Douglas, Kent, St. Augustine's) 219

OLIVER CROMWELL'S BUST.—Questions, Mr. Claude Hay and Mr. James Lowther (Kent, Thanet): Answers, Mr. Victor Cavendish 220

SUPPLY [11TH ALLOTTED DAY.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903-4.—REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

1. Motion made and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £563,000, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Customs Department."

Sir Edward Strachey (Somersetshire, S.) 221

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item A (Salaries) be reduced by £100, in respect of the salary of the Chairman."—(*Sir Edward Strachey.*)

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Arthur Elliot, Durham) ... 222
Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis) 222
Capt. Norton (Newington, W.) 223
Mr. T. W. Russell (Tyrone, S.) 224
Mr. Cohen (Islington, E.) 224
Mr. Chaplin (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) 225
Mr. Lough (Islington, W.) 225
Sir Edward Strachey 225
Mr. Maconochie (Aberdeenshire, E.) 226
Sir Edward Strachey 226

Question put and negatived.

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. Toulmin (Lancashire, Bury) 227
Mr. Elliot 227
Mr. Whitley (Halifax) 228

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum not exceeding £559,000 be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Whitley.*)

Mr. Gibson Bowles 228
Mr. J. H. Lewis (Flint Boroughs) 229
Mr. Markham (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield) 230
Mr. Elliot 230
Mr. Nussey (Pontefract) 231
Mr. Markham 231
Mr. Elliot 231

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Mr. Edmund Robertson (Dundee) 232
Mr. Gibson Bowles 232
Mr. Whitley 232
Mr. Elliot 233
Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs) 233

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 37; Noes, 96. (Division List, No. 112.)

Original Question again proposed.

Capt. Norton 235
Mr. Elliot 239
Capt. Norton 240

Motion made, and Question put, "That a sum, not exceeding £562,900, be granted for the said Service."—(*Captain Norton.*)

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 48: Noes, 110. (Division List No 113.)

Original Question put, and agreed to.

2. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £1,370,500, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Inland Revenue Department."

Mr. Charles Allen (Gloucestershire, Stroud) 241
Mr. Elliot 241
Mr. J. H. Lewis 242
Mr. Gibson Bowles 243
Mr. Elliot 244
Sir John Leng (Dundee) 245
Mr. Elliot 246
Mr. Soares (Devonshire, Barnstaple) 246
Mr. Gibson Bowles 246

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item E (Commuted Allowances, etc.) be reduced by £200."—(*Mr. Gibson Bowles.*)

Mr. Elliot 248

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. Soares 248

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £1,370,400, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Soares.*)

Mr. Elliot 248
Mr. Caldwell (Lanarkshire, Mid) 249

Question put—

The Committee divided: Ayes 47; Noes 129. (Division List No. 114.)

Original Question put, and agreed to.

3. £536,790 to complete the sum for Post Office Packet Service.

Mr. Caldwell (Lanarkshire, Mid) ... 251
Mr. Henniker Heaton (Canterbury) ... 262
The Postmaster-General (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.) ... 263
Mr. Caldwell ... 270

Vote agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,549,430, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and working expenses of the Post Office Telegraph Service."

Mr. James O'Connor (Wicklow, W.) ... 271
Mr. Henniker Heaton ... 271
Mr. Herbert Samuel (Yorkshire, Cleveland) ... 275
Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton) ... 276
Sir John Leng (Dundee) ... 276

And, it being half-past Seven of the Clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee also report Progress; to sit again this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway (Various Powers) Bill [BY ORDER]. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

SUPPLY [11TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903-4—REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

1. £2,549,430, to complete the sum for Post Office Telegraphs.

Sir John Leng ... 277
Mr. Austen Chamberlain ... 278
Mr. Herbert Samuel ... 288
Mr. Fredrick Wilson (Norfolk, Mid) ... 288
Mr. Dalziel (Kirkcaldy Burghs) ... 289
Mr. John Campbell (Armagh, S.) ... 289
Mr. Dalziel ... 289
Mr. Austen Chamberlain ... 290

Vote agreed to.

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Class IV.

2. £88,619, to complete the sum for British Museum.

Mr. Soares ... 291
Mr. Markham ... 291
Mr. Elliot ... 291
Mr. Charles Hobhouse (Bristol, E.) ... 292
Mr. Elliot ... 293

Vote agreed to.

3. £7,027, to complete the sum for National Gallery.

Mr. Herbert Samuel ... 293
Mr. Elliot ... 293

Vote agreed to.

4. £2,445, to complete the sum for National Portrait Gallery.

5. £3,281, to complete the sum for Wallace Collection.

Mr. Whitley ... 294

Vote agreed to.

6. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £23,780, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for sundry Grants in aid of Scientific Investigation, etc., and other Grants."

Mr. Brigg (Yorkshire W.R., Keighley) ... 295
Capt. C. B. Balfour (Middlesex, Hornsey) ... 295
Mr. Dalziel ... 296

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £23,680, be granted for the said service."—(*Mr. Dalziel.*)

Mr. Markham ... 296
Mr. Elliot ... 297
Mr. Charles Hobhouse ... 297
Mr. Dalziel ... 298
Mr. Elliot ... 299

Question put.

Committee divided:—Ayes, 36; Noes, 119. (Division List No. 115.)

Original Question put, and agreed to.

7. £77,100, to complete the sum for Universities and Colleges, Great Britain, and Intermediate Education, Wales.

Resolutions to be reported.

Class VII.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £27,000, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Salaries and other Expenses of Temporary Commissions, Committees, and Special Inquiries."

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Mr. Caldwell (Lanarkshire, Mid) 301
The Lord Advocate (Mr. A. Graham Murray, Buteshire) 303
Mr. Caldwell 304

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £26,900, be granted for the said service."—(*Mr. Caldwell.*)

Mr. Dalziel 305
Mr. Brigg 307
Mr. Soares 307
Mr. Elliot 307
Mr. Caldwell 308

And, it being Midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Resolutions to be reported upon Wednesday; Committee also report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday.

Adjourned at seven minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: TUESDAY, 9TH JUNE, 1903.

The House met at Two of the clock.

IMPRISONMENT OF A MEMBER (MR. M'HUGH).—MR. SPEAKER informed the House that he had received a letter relative to the imprisonment of a Member.

Mr. John Redmond 309
The Attorney-General for Ireland (Mr. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.) ... 310
Mr. Swift MacNeill (Donegal, S.) 310

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz: Cardiff Railway Bill [Lords]; Preston, Chorley, and Horwich Tramways Bill [Lords]; Torquay Corporation Water Bill [Lords]; British Gas Light Company (Norwich) Bill [Lords]; Tynemouth and District Tramways Bill [Lords]; Worthing Corporation (Tramways) Bill [Lords]; Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation Bill [Lords]; London, Brighton and South Coast Railway Bill [Lords]; Port Talbot Railway and Docks Bill [Lords]; St. Philip's Chapel (Regent Street) Bill [Lords]; King's College, London Bill [Lords]; Aston Manor Improvement Bill [Lords]; Hastings Tramways (Extensions) Bill [Lords]; South Lancashire Tramways Bill [Lords]; Dewsbury, Batley, and Birstal Tramways Bill [Lords]; Chard Corporation Gas and Electricity Bill [Lords]; Pontypridd Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; Jewish Colonisation Association Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time 312

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SUBSTITUTED BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS COMPLIED WITH).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That in respect of the following Bills introduced pursuant to the provisions of The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, and which the Chairman of Ways and Means had directed to originate in the House of Lords, the Standing Orders have been complied with, viz.: Scottish Central Electric Power (Substituted) Bill [Lords]; Scottish Ontario and Manitoba Land Company, Limited (Substituted) Bill [Lords]; Hutcheson's Hospital and Hutcheson's Educational Trust (Substituted) Bill [Lords] 313

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz.: Military Lands Provisional Orders Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow 313

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, viz.: Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 17) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 18) Bill; Broughty Ferry Gas Provisional Order Bill; Hamilton Burgh Provisional Order Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time To-morrow 314

PATENT OFFICE EXTENSION BILL (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred pursuant to the Order of the House of the 28th day of May last, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz.: Patent Office Extension Bill 314

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1899.—The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS reported, That, after conferring with the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords, for the purpose of determining in which House of Parliament the respective Bills should be first considered, under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, they had determined that the Bills contained in the following List should originate in the House of Lords, viz.:—Scottish Central Electric Power Bill; Scottish Ontario and Manitoba Land Company, Limited, Bill; Hutcheson's Hospital and Hutcheson's Educational Trust Bill 314

PETITIONS.

BURGH POLICE (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Argyll, for alteration; to lie upon the Table 315

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.—Petitions against: from Taunton; and Romford; to lie upon the Table 315

COAL MINES REGULATION BILL.—Petition from Atherton, in favour; to lie upon the Table 315

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petition from Kidderminster, in favour; to lie upon the Table 315

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LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL.—Petitions against: from Maidstone; and Northwich; to lie upon the Table 315

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL, AND LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.—Petition from Heywood, against: to lie upon the Table 315

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.—Petitions against: from Maidstone; and Northwich; to lie upon the Table 315

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petition from Grangemouth, for alteration; to lie upon the Table 315

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT (1894) AMENDMENT BILL.—Petition from Govan, against; to lie upon the Table 315

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.—Petitions against: from Newferry; Thirsk; and Taunton; to lie upon the Table 315

PORT OF LONDON BILL.—Petitions against (praying to be heard by Counsel): from Southend-on-Sea Corporation; Master, Wardens, and Commonalty of Watermen and Lightermen of the River Thames; Public Wharfingers adjoining the Port of London; Great Eastern Railway Company; James Hilditch Gough; North London Railway Company; and Southend-on-Sea; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill... 315

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL.—Petition from Willesden Junction, in favour; to lie upon the Table 316

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.—Petitions in favour, from Hammersmith; St. Leonard's; and Kidderminster; to lie upon the Table 316

SHEEP SCAB BILL.—Petition from Argyll, in favour; to lie upon the Table ... 316

TRADE DISPUTES BILL.—Petition from Atherton, in favour; to lie upon the Table 316

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

INTOXICATING LIQUORS (LICENCES REFUSED).—Return presented, relative thereto [Address 27th May—*Mr. Cochrane*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 194.] 316

ARRESTS FOR DRUNKENNESS (IRELAND).—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 18th May—*Mr. Sloan*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 195.] 316

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).—Copy presented, of Thirtieth Annual Report by the Accountant for Scotland to the Scotch Education Department [by command]; to lie upon the Table 316

TRISTAN DA CUNHA.—Copy presented, of further correspondence relating to the Island of Tristan da Cunha (in continuation of [C. 8357] February, 1897) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 316

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

INCOME TAX DEDUCTIONS ON DEBENTURES.—Question, Sir Frederick Banbury (Camberwell, Peckham); Answer, Mr. Ritchie 317

BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE NAVY LEAGUE.—Question, Mr. John Ellis (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield); Answer, Sir William Anson 317

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British Trade with Foreign Countries, India and the Colonies.—Question, Mr. Lambert (Devonshire, South Molton); Answer, Mr. Bonar Law 318

Overloading of Foreign Ships in British Ports.—Question, Sir Robert Ropner (Stockton); Answer, Mr. Bonar Law 318

Honorary Rank of Major for Inspectors of Army Schools.—Question, Mr. Yoxall (Nottingham, W.); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 318

South African War—Medal Clasps for Hospital Nurses.—Question, Sir John Leng (Dundee); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 319

Army Pensions—Boy Service.—Question, Mr. Reginald Lucas (Portsmouth); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 319

Indian Army and Army Service Corps Appointments for Woolwich Cadets.—Question, Mr. Agg-Gardner (Cheltenham); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 320

Expulsion of the "Times" Correspondent from Russia.—Question, Mr. Martin (Worcestershire, Droitwich); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 320

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Indulgence Passages for British Officers—Question, Mr. Heywood Johnstone (Sussex, Horsham); Answer, the Secretary of State for War (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford) 321

Longmoor Camp.—Question, Mr. Heywood Johnstone; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 322

The Cape "Ragging" Case.—Question, Mr. Swift MacNeill (Donegal, S.); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 322

Gunnery Practice in the Navy.—Question, Mr. Gibson Bowles; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Arnold-Forster, Belfast, W.) ... 323

Official Reports of Parliamentary Debates in other Countries.—Question, Mr. Lough (Islington, W.); Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Lord Cranborne, Rochester) 324

Registration of Money Lenders.—Question, Mr. Lough; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Ritchie, Croydon) 325

Business of the House.—Questions, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs), Sir Charles Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean), Mr. Gibson Bowles, and Mr. John Redmond (Waterford); Answers, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 326

The Fiscal Policy of the Government.—Questions, Sir M. Hicks-Beach (Bristol, W.), Mr. Chaplin (Lincolnshire, Sleaford), Sir John Gorst (Cambridge University), and Mr. John Ellis (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe); Answers, Mr. Speaker 327

National Expenditure.—Ordered, That the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on National Expenditure in Session 1902 be referred to the Select Committee on National Expenditure.—(*Sir James Fergusson*). 329

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NEW BILLS.

Police (Superannuation) Bill.—"To amend the Police Act, 1890, with respect to Superannuation," presented by Mr. Cochrane; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 238.] 329

Trade Marks (Cotton Wares) Bill. -"To amend the Law relating to the registration of Trade Marks in respect of Cotton Wares." presented by Sir William Houldsworth, supported by Sir William Holland; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 239.] 329

Metropolitan Streets Bill.—"To amend the Metropolitan Streets Act, 1867," presented by Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas, supported by Mr. Cochrane; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 240]. 329

Finance Bill -SECOND READING. -Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Chaplin (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) 330
Mr. David MacIver (Liverpool, Kirkdale) 342

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'that,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'this House considers that the financial policy of His Majesty's Government, in the remission of indirect taxation imposed only last year for purposes of a permanent character, involves a needless and injurious disturbance of trade and a serious loss to the Revenue, without substantial relief to the consumer; and that, if any remission of indirect taxation is considered necessary by His Majesty's Government, such remission ought to be made by a reduction of the Duties proposed to be levied on tea or other articles of general consumption.'"—(*Mr. Chaplin.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question"

Sir M. Hicks-Beach (Bristol, W.) 346
Major Rasch (Essex, Chelmsford) 357
Sir Harry Seton-Karr (St. Helens) 358
The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Ritchie, Croydon) 362
Sir Henry Fowler (Wolverhampton, E.) 374
Mr. Middlemore (Birmingham, N.) 381
Sir Joseph Leese (Lancashire, Accrington) 384
Mr. Beckett (Yorkshire, N.R., Whitby) 386
Mr. Theodore Tayler (Lancashire, Radcliffe) 390
Mr. Hardy (Kent, Ashford) 394
Mr. Vicary Gibbs (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) 396

And, it being half-past Seven of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned till this Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

Finance Bill.—Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Amendment to Question [9th June], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Which Amendment was—

> "To leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question in order to add the words, 'This House considers that the financial policy of His Majesty's Government, in the remission of indirect taxation imposed only last year for purposes of a permanent character, involves a needless and injurious disturbance of trade and a serious loss to the Revenue, without substantial relief to the consumer; and that, if any remission of indirect taxation is considered necessary by His Majesty's Government, such remission ought to be made by a reduction of the duties proposed to be levied on tea or other articles of general consumption.'"—(*Mr. Chaplin.*)

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate resumed.

Mr. Austin Taylor (*Liverpool, E. Toxteth*) 398
Mr. Toulmin (*Bury*) 404
Sir John Gorst (*Cambridge University*) 407
Mr. Bryce (*Aberdeen, S.*) 411
The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (*Mr. Elliot, Durham*) 419
Mr. Robson (*South Shields*) 425
Mr. Renwick (*Newcastle-on-Tyne*)... 427
Mr. Crooks (*Woolwich*) 431
Major Seely (*Isle of Wight*) 433

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Major Seely.*)

Mr. Ritchie... 434

Question put, and agreed to.

Debate to be resumed to-morrow.

SUPPLY [8TH JUNE, AFTERNOON SITTING.]

Resolutions reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903–4.—REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £563,000, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and expenses of the Customs Department."
2. "That a sum, not exceeding £1,370,500, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and expenses of the Inland Revenue Department."
3. "That a sum, not exceeding £536,790, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Expenses of the Post-Office Packet Service."

Resolutions agreed to 434

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PUBLIC OFFICES (DUBLIN) [ADVANCES].

Resolution reported.—"That it is expedient to authorise the issue, out of the Consolidated Fund, of such sums, not exceeding in the whole £225,000, as may be required for the purposes of any Act of the present session for the acquisition of certain land in Dublin, and for the erection and equipment of a Royal College of Science and other buildings for the public service, and to authorise the Treasury for the purpose of providing for the issue and repayment of such sums to borrow money by means of Terminable Annuities for a period not exceeding thirty years, such annuities to be paid out of moneys to be provided by Parliament for the Service of the Commissioners, and if those moneys are insufficient out of the Consolidated Fund."

Resolution read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

Mr. Caldwell (Lanarkshire, Mid.) 435
Mr. Buchanan (Perthshire, E.) 436

And, it being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed this day.

Military Lands Bill.—Read a second time, and committed for this day.

Adjourned at three minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: WEDNESDAY, 10TH JUNE, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

London Hydraulic Power Bill.—Lords' Amendment considered, and agreed to 437

All Saints, Poplar (Rate Abolition) Bill [LORDS].—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment 437

Middlesbrough Corporation Bill.—Read the third time, and passed ... 437

Exeter Railway Bill [LORDS].—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment 437

Lanarkshire and Dumbartonshire Railway Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 437

Lima Railway Bill [LORDS].—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment 437

South Yorkshire Joint Railways Bill.—Read the third time, and passed ... 437

Dover Corporation Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 437

Knott End Railway (Extension of Time) Bill [Lords].—[Not amended], considered; to be read the third time 437

Merthyr Tydfil Urban District Council Bill; Wigan Corporation Tramways Bill; Western Valleys (Monmouthshire) Sewerage Board Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 437

Belfast Water Bill [Lords] (by Order).—Read a second time, and committed 437

Forth Navigation Order Confirmation Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 437

Caledonian Railway Order Confirmation Bill; Edinburgh Corporation (Markets, Slaughter Houses, etc.) Order Confirmation Bill; Grangemouth Water Order Confirmation Bill; Lanarkshire Electricity and Refuse Destruction Order Confirmation Bill.—Read a second time; to be considered upon Friday 437

Broughty Ferry Gas Provisional Order Bill; Hamilton Burgh Provisional Order Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 17) Bill; Local Government Provisional Order (No. 18) Bill; Military Lands Provisional Orders Bill.—Read a second time, and committed 438

PETITIONS.

Burgh Police (Scotland) Bill.—Petition from Midlothian, for alteration; to lie upon the Table 438

Church Discipline Bill.—Petitions against; from Willesden; Brentwood; Northchurch; Ashley Green; and Berkhampsted St. Peter; to lie upon the Table 438

County Councils (Bills in Parliament) Bill.—Petition from Midlothian, in favour; to lie upon the Table... 438

County Courts Jurisdiction Extension Bill.—Petition from Chester, in favour; to lie upon the Table 438

Education (Scotland) Bill.—Petition from Old Monkland, in favour; to lie upon the Table 438

Employment of Children Bill.—Petitions in favour: from Old Monkland; Aberdeen; and Leith; to lie upon the Table 438

Licences Renewal and Transfer Bill, and Licensing Law (Compensation for Non-Renewal) Bill.—Petition from Penzance, against; to lie upon the Table 438

Licensing (Scotland) Acts Amendment Bill.—Petitions for alteration: from Ballater; Selkirk (two); Aberdeen; and Leith; to lie upon the Table ... 438

Local Government (Scotland) Bill.—Petition from Aberdeen, in favour; to lie upon the Table 439

Port of London Bill.—Petitions against (praying to be heard by Counsel): from Merchants, Traders, and others carrying on business on the banks of the River Medway; Urban District Council of Gillingham; Conservators of the River Medway; Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors of the City of Westminster; Holders of Debenture Stock of the Milwall Dock Company;

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Maidstone Corporation ; Company of Proprietors of the Lower Navigation of the River Medway ; London and North Western Railway Company ; Railways Companies' Association ; Trustees of the Royal Liver Friendly Society ; London and India Docks Company ; Urban District Council of Tonbridge ; Holders of Debenture Stock and Mortgage Debentures of the London and India Docks Company ; London County Council ; Merchants, Traders, and others carrying on business in the district of Maidstone and Tonbridge and other places on the River Medway ; Coal Factors Society ; Millwall Dock Company ; and Woolwich Borough Council ; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill 439

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL.—Petitions in favour : from Southampton ; London Road ; Broomhill ; Wirksworth ; Winnington ; New Brompton ; and Selkirk ; to lie upon the Table 439

PUBLIC HOUSES (HOURS OF CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petitions in favour : from Edinburgh ; and Glasgow ; to lie upon the Table 439

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.—Petition from Aberdeen, for alteration ; to lie upon the Table 439

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LABOURERS' COTTAGES (IRELAND). —Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 16th March—*Mr. Thomas O'Donnell*] ; to lie upon the Table 440

LUNATIC ASYLUMS (IRELAND).—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 26th March—*Mr. Clancy*] ; to lie upon the Table 440

UGANDA RAILWAY ACTS, 1896 AND 1900.—Account presented, showing the money issued from the Consolidated Fund under the Provisions of the Uganda Railway Acts, 1896 (59 and 60 Vic., c. 38), and 1900 (63 and 64 Vic., c. 11), and of the Money expended and borrowed, and Securities created under the said Act, to 31st March, 1902, together with the Report of the Comptroller, and Auditor-General thereon [by Act] ; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 196.]... 440

WAGES AND PROFITS IN COAL MINING. —Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 5th May—*Mr. Joseph Walton*] ; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 197.] 440

AFRICA (No. 5, 1903).—Copy presented, of Return giving Dates of Purchase and prices paid for Rails, Sleepers, Girders, Locomotives, Carriages, and Bridge Work obtained for the construction and working of the Uganda Railway [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table 440

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NEW BILL.

Small Holdings Bill.—"To amend the Small Holdings Act, 1892," presented by Mr. Jesse Collings, supported by Mr. Walter Long, Mr. Goulding, Major Rasch, Mr. Carlile, and Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 25th June, and to be printed. [Bill 241.]

Finance Bill—[SECOND READING].—Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question [9th June], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Which Amendment was—

"To leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'this House considers that the financial policy of His Majesty's Government, in the remission of indirect taxation imposed only last year for purposes of a permanent character, involves a needless and injurious disturbance of trade and a serious loss to the Revenue, without substantial relief to the consumer; and that, if any remission of indirect taxation is considered necessary by His Majesty's Government, such remission ought to be made by a reduction of the Duties proposed to be levied on tea or other articles of general consumption.'"—(*Mr. Chaplin.*)

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

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And, it being half-past Seven of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till this Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

FINANCE BILL—[SECOND READING.].—Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question [9th June], "That the Bill be now read a second time"—

Which Amendment was—

> "To leave out the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'this House considers that the financial policy of His Majesty's Government, in the remission of indirect taxation imposed only last year for purposes of a permanent character involves a needless and injurious disturbance of trade and a serious loss to the Revenue, without substantial relief to the consumer; and that, if any remission of indirect taxation is considered necessary by His Majesty's Government, such remission ought to be made by a reduction of the Duties proposed to be levied on tea or other articles of general consumption.'"—(*Mr. Chaplin.*)

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."—

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Mr. Malcolm (Suffolk, Stowmarket) ... 547
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Sir Herbert Maxwell (Wigtonshire) ... 551
Mr. Lloyd George (Carnarvon Boroughs) ... 554
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) ... 557
Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs) ... 576

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 424; Noes, 28. (Division List No. 116.)

Main Question again proposed.

Motion made, and Question, "That the debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Joseph Walton.*)

Put, and agreed to.

Debate to be resumed upon Friday.

Adjourned at eighteen minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: THURSDAY, 11TH JUNE, 1903.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with:—

Metropolitan District Railway (Various Powers).

The same was ordered to lie on the Table 589

NORTH METROPOLITAN ELECTRIC POWER SUPPLY.—Petition of the North Metropolitan Electric Power Supply Company under their common seal, praying for leave to introduce a Bill to empower the Urban District Council of Willesden to sell their generating station at Willesden to the North Metropolitan Electric Power Supply Company; to confer further powers upon that Company; and for other purposes; together with a copy of the proposed Bill annexed thereto; read, and referred to the Examiners 589

Derby Gas Bill [H.L.]—Reported, with Amendments 589

Kip's Patents Bill [H.L.]; Pentillie Estate Bill [H.L.]; Lochnell Estate Bill [H.L.].—Committed 589

Exeter Corporation Bill [H.L.]—Read 3^{a}, and passed, and sent to the Commons 589

Local Government (Transfer of Powers) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 8) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 11) Bill; Naval Works Provisional Order Bill; Forth Navigation Order Confirmation Bill.—Brought from the Commons 589

Middlesbrough Corporation Bill; Lanarkshire and Dumbartonshire Railway Bill; South Yorkshire Joint Railways Bill; Blackheath and Greenwich District Electric Light Bill; Wolverhampton and Cannock Chase Railway (Extension of Time) Bill; Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Railway Bill; Great Southern and Western Railway Bill; Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland Bill; Mullingar, Kells, and Drogheda Railway Bill.—Brought from the Commons; read 1^{a}; and referred to the Examiners ... 539

Plymouth Corporation Bill; Woolwich Borough Council Bill; Beckenham Urban District Council Bill; Great Northern, Piccadilly and Brompton Railway (Various Powers) Bill; Great Western Railway Bill; Grindleford, Baslow, and Bakewell Railway Bill; Hainault Forest Bill; London County Council (Money) Bill; Neath, Pontardawe, and Brynaman Railway Bill; North-Eastern Railway Bill; Romford and District Tramways Bill; Wood Green Urban District Council Bill.—Brought from the Commons; read 1; and referred to the Examiners 590

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Faversham Gas Bill [H.L.]; North's Navigation Collieries Bill [H.L.]; Life Association of Scotland Bill [H.L.]; Pelican and British Empire Life Office Bill [H.L.]; Lima Railways Bill [H.L.]; Exeter Railway Bill [H.L.]; All Saints, Poplar (Rate Abolition) Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to 590

London Hydraulic Power Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendment agreed to... 590

Sutton District Water Bill; Bridgwater Gas Bill; East Ardsley Gas Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to 590

Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Five Lords appointed a Select Committee on the Mid Yorkshire Tramways Bill [H.L.] and other Bills, do form the Select Committee for the consideration of the Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.] 590

Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]; Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]; Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Committed to a Committee of the Whole House 590

Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]; Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]; Gas and Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.]—Committed: The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 591

PETITIONS.

LAND REGISTERS (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.].—Petition against; of the Faculty of Procurators in Glasgow; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 591

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COLLEGE CHARTER ACT, 1871.—Papers respecting: Laid before the House on the 26th of May last, to be printed. (No. 96.) 591

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION.—The Order made on the 26th of May last for printing return respecting discharged... 591

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that the following papers, having been commanded to be presented to this House by His Majesty, had been so presented on the following dates by delivery to the Clerk of the Parliaments, pursuant to Standing Order No. CXI., viz.—

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS, 1902).—Report on the agricultural returns relating to acreage and produce of crops and number of live stock in Great Britain; with summaries for the United Kingdom, British Possessions, and Foreign Countries, and particulars of prices, imports and exports of agricultural produce 591

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

I. Associations constituted under the Voluntary Schools Act, 1897.

II. Associated schools and amounts of aid grant paid.

III. Unassociated schools and amounts of aid grant paid, 1902–1903 591

TRADE.—Annual statement of the trade of the United Kingdom with Foreign Countries and British Possessions, 1902, compared with the four preceding years. Volume II. 591

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COMMERCIAL NO. 4 (1903).—Suez Canal: Returns of Shipping and Tonnage, 1900, 1901, 1902. (In continuation of Commercial No. 2 (1902.) ... 592

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).—Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, dated 28th May 1903, providing for the distribution of the General Aid Grant (with explanatory memorandum) 592

GENERAL POST OFFICE.—Parcel Post Agreement, with detailed regulations, between Great Britain and the Netherlands 592

PUBLIC RECORDS.—Sixty-fourth Annual Report of the deputy keeper of the public records 592

EXPLOSIVES ACT, 1875.—Twenty-seventh Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspector of Explosives, being their annual report for the year 1902 ... 592

COLONIES (MISCELLANEOUS).—Papers relating to the investigation of malaria and other tropical diseases, and the establishment of schools of tropical medicine... 592

TREATY SERIES, NO. 8 (1903).—Protocol between the United Kingdom and the United States of Venezuela, relating to the settlement of British claims and other matters: signed at Washington, 13th February, 1903; together with agreements for the reference of certain questions to the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague, and for the decision of other claims by a mixed Commission; signed at Washington, 7th May 1903 592

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).—No. 2987. Turkey (Bussorah); No. 2988. California, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona; No. 2989. Germany (Prussian Estimates); No. 2990. Roumania 592

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS (IRELAND).—Agricultural Statistics of Ireland; with detailed report for the year 1902 592

CONGESTED DISTRICTS BOARD (IRELAND).—Report of the Board, for the year ended 31st March, 1903 593

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY.—Forty-sixth Annual Report of the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery, 1902–1903 593

SOUTH AFRICA.—Draft Customs Union Convention agreed to by representatives of the British Colonies and Territories in South Africa at a Conference at Bloemfontein in March, 1903 593

DUBLIN METROPOLITAN POLICE.—Statistical Tables for the year 1902 ... 593

STRIKES AND LOCK-OUTS, BOARD OF TRADE (LABOUR DEPARTMENT).—Report on the strikes and lock-outs in the United Kingdom in 1902, and on Conciliation and Arbitration Boards 593

TRISTAN DA CUNHA.—Further correspondence relating to the Island of Tristan da Cunha. (In continuation of [Cd. 8357], February 1897.) 593

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

AFRICA, NO. 5 (1903).—Return giving dates of purchase and prices paid for rails, sleepers, girders, locomotives, carriages, and bridge work obtained for the construction and working of the Uganda Railway 593

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TRADE OF BRITISH POSSESSIONS.—Statement of the value of the Trade of the various British Colonies and Possessions with the United Kingdom, other British Possessions, and Foreign Countries during the year 1901 593

TRADE REPORTS—I. MISCELLANEOUS SERIES.

No. 592. Italy (Municipalisation of Bakeries of Catania) 594

II. ANNUAL SERIES.

No. 2991. Greece (Piræus).

No. 2992. Spain (Cadiz).

No. 2993. France (Réunion) 593

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).—Thirtieth Annual Report by the Accountant for Scotland to the Scotch Education Department 594

FISHERIES (SCOTLAND).—Twenty-first Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland, being for the year 1902. Part III. Scientific Investigations ... 594

INDIA (CORONATION OF HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII.)—Account of the Durbar held at Delhi, 1st January, 1903.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 594

INEBRIATES ACT, 1898, PRISONS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1877, AND SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND ACTS, 1885–1899.—Rule made by the Secretary for Scotland as to the appointment of a Visiting Committee to the State Inebriate Reformatory at Perth 594

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1899.—Report by the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords and the Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons 594

VICTORIA.—The Constitution Act, 1903 594

INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION (IRELAND).—Rule made by the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland appointing the places at which the Examinations shall be held in 1903 594

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (RULES).—Rule, dated 18th May, 1903, as to Assistant Commissioners 594

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.—Returns relating to the Council.

I. Return showing, up to 31st March, 1903 594

The amount of Consolidated Stock.
The application of the money raised by such stock.
The sums carried to the Consolidated Loans Fund.
The application of the Consolidated Loans Fund.
An estimate of the expenditure of the Council for all purposes, for the year ending 31st March, 1904.

II. Return showing, up to the 31st March, 1903.

All moneys raised by the Metropolitan Board of Works and the Council since the passing of the Act for the purposes mentioned in the Act.

Particulars in relation to every parish, district, union, or place in respect whereof a loan has been obtained from the Metropolitan Board of Works or the Council since the passing of the Act ... 594

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IMPERIAL INSTITUTE.—Treasury Minute, dated 26th May, 1903, directing that the "Imperial Institute Account" shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General 595

SUPERANNUATION (PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS).

I. Treasury Minute, dated 15th May, 1903, declaring that professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired on the public service are required for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of—

Deputy Master and Controller of the Royal Mint; Third Assistant to the Chief Crown Solicitor for Ireland.

II. Treasury Minutes, dated 13th May, 1903, declaring that Joseph Woolveston, Royal Laboratory, War Office; dated 8th June, 1903, declaring that Alfred Robinson, artificer, Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield, were appointed without Civil Service certificates through inadvertence on the part of the head of their Departments 595

ALKALI, ETC., WORKS REGULATION ACT, 1881 AND 1892.—Thirty-ninth Annual Report on Alkali, etc., Works, by the Chief Inspector; Proceedings during the year 1902, presented to the Local Government Board and to the Secretary for Scotland 595

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF SURREY). — Order made by the County Council of the county of Surrey ordering that a second polling place be provided for the parish of Godstone at Blindley Heath 595

LOCAL LOANS FUND (ACCOUNTS, 1901–1902).—Accounts of receipts and payments by the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt in respect of the capital and income of the Local Loans Fund, for the year ended 31st March, 1902, together with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon 596

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION ACT, 1889.—Minute by the Board of Education sanctioning the subjects to be taught under Clause 8 of the Technical Instruction Act, 1889, for the county of Glamorgan 596

ARKLOW HARBOUR.—Report of the Arklow Harbour Commissioners and statement of accounts for 1902.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 596

MEDWAY CONSERVANCY.—Statement of receipts and expenditures of the Conservators, for the year ended 25th March, 1902. Delivered (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table... 596

MUNICIPAL TRADING.—Message from the Commons that they have appointed a Committee, to consist of seven Members, to join with a Committee of this House, to consider and report as to the principles which should govern powers given by Bills and Provisional Orders to municipal and other local authorities for industrial enterprise within or without the area of their jurisdiction, and to request that this House appoint an equal number of Lords to be joined with the Members of their House 596

PORT OF LONDON BILL.—Message from the Commons that they have committed the Port of London Bill to a Select Committee of five Members to join with a Committee of this House, and to request that this House appoint an equal number of Lords to be joined with the Members of their House ... 596

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THE SERVIAN REVOLUTION.

Earl Spencer ... 597
The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (*The Marquess of Lansdowne*)... 597

County Councils (Bills in Parliament) Bill.—[SECOND READING.]—Order of the Day for the Second Reading Read.

Lord Kenyon ... 597

Moved, That the Bill be now read 2ª.—(*Lord Kenyon.*)

The Earl of Wemyss ... 598

Amendment moved—

"To leave out all the words after 'That' for the purpose of inserting the following words, viz., 'in view of the appointment of a Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament "to consider and report as to the principles which should govern powers given by Bills and Provisional Orders to municipal and other local authorities for industrial enterprise within or without the area of their jurisdiction," this House is of opinion that pending the Report of such Committee, no Bills of the character of the County Councils Bills or Borough Funds Bill, which would empower the spending of the ratepayers' money in promoting and opposing Bills in Parliament without having first obtained the ratepayers' assent to such expenditure, should be considered by this House.'"—(*The Lord Wemyss, E. Wemyss.*)

The Secretary for Scotland (*Lord Balfour of Burleigh*) ... 603
Lord Belper ... 606
The Marquess of Ripon ... 607
Lord Avebury ... 608

On Question, whether the words proposed shall stand part of the Motion, resolved in the affirmative: Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next.

Borough Funds Bill.—[SECOND READING].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Lord Kenyon ... 609

Moved, That the Bill be now read 2ª.—(*Lord Kenyon.*)

Lord Balfour of Burleigh ... 610
The Earl of Camperdown ... 613
Lord Avebury ... 613

Amendment moved—

"To leave out the word 'now' in order to add at the end of the Motion 'this day six months.'"—(*Lord Avebury.*)

Lord Balfour of Burleigh ... 616
Lord Avebury ... 616

On Question, "Whether the word proposed to be left out shall stand part of the Motion."

Their Lordships divided:—Contents, 57; Not-contents, 17.

Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next.

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Lord Heneage 617
The President of the Board of Agriculture (*The Earl of Onslow*) ... 619

Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Amendment) Bill [H.L.].—Amendments reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next 619

Union of Benefices Act, 1860, Amendment Bill [H.L.]—Amendment reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next ... 619

Polling Districts (County Councils) Bill [H.L.]—Amendment reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next 619

Polling Arrangements (Parliamentary Boroughs) Bill [H.L.]—Amendment reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next 619

Local Government (Transfer of Powers Bill).—Read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 97.) 619

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill (No. 98); Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 8) Bill (No. 99); Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 11) Bill. (No. 100); Naval Works Provisional Order Bill. (No. 101).—Read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners 620

Forth Navigation Order Confirmation Bill.—Read 1ª; to be printed, and (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899), deemed to have been read 2ª (*The Lord Balfour*), and reported from the Committee. (No. 102) 620

Board of Agriculture and Fisheries Bill [H.L.].—A Bill to transfer to the Board of Agriculture powers and duties relating to the industry of fishing, and to amend the Board of Agriculture Act, 1889—Was presented by the Earl of Onslow; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Monday next. (No. 103) 620

House adjourned at Six o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: THURSDAY, 11TH JUNE, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS]. (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH.)—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz.:—
London and North Western Railway Bill [Lords].
Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time 620

Beckenham Urban District Council Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 620

Cleveland and Durham County Electric Power Bill [LORDS].—Read the third time, and passed, with an Amendment... 621

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Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway (Various Powers) Bill (King's Consent signified).—Read the third time, and passed ... 621

Great Western Railway Bill (King's Consent and Prince of Wales' Consent signified).—Read the third time and passed 621

Grindleford, Baslow, and Bakewell Railway Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 621

Hainault Forest Bill (King's Consent signified).—Read the third time, and passed 621

India Rubber, Gutta Percha, and Telegraph Works Company Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed with Amendments 621

London County Council (Money) Bill.—Read the third time, and passed ... 621

Milford Docks Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed with Amendments 621

Neath, Pontardawe, and Brynaman Railway Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 621

North Eastern Railway Bill (King's Consent signified).—Read the third time, and passed 621

Romford and District Tramways Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 621

South Wales Mineral Railway Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment 621

Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Bill [Lords]; Wellington (Salop) Gas Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments ... 622

Wood Green Urban District Council Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 622

Bristol, London, and Southern Counties Railway Bill.—Reported [Preamble not proved]; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed ... 622

Electric Lighting (London) Bill [Lords].—Ordered, That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Electric Lighting (London) Bill [Lords] with respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bills.—(*Mr. Elliot.*)... 622

Message from the Lords.—That they have agreed to Amendments to Plymouth and Stonehouse Gas Bill [Lords], without Amendment 622

PETITIONS.

Church Discipline Bill.—Petition from Beckenham, against; to lie upon the Table 622

Electric Lighting Act, 1882, and Electric Lighting (Scotland) Act, 1890.—Petition from Haddington, for alteration of law; to lie upon the Table 622

Employment of Children Bill.—Petition from Newport (Fife), against; to lie upon the Table 622

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HERITABLE PROPERTY (SCOTLAND) (REGISTRATION OF WRITS).—Petition from Haddington, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table 622

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL.—Petitions against: from West Bromwich; Grimsby; and Glasgow; to lie upon the Table 622

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.—Petitions against: from Glasgow; Grimsby; and Eccles; to lie upon the Table 622

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petitions for alteration: from Glenbuck; Letham; Glasgow; and St. Ternan; to lie upon the Table 623

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petition from Haddington, in favour; to lie upon the Table 623

LOCAL AUTHORITIES OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION BILL.—Petitions in favour: from Camberwell; and School Board for London; to lie upon the Table ... 623

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Haddington, against; to lie upon the Table 623

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petitions for alteration: from Haddington; and Scottish Home Timber Merchants' Association; to lie upon the Table 623

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PORT OF LONDON BILL.—Petitions against (praying to be heard by Counsel): From General Shipowners Society, London; Council of the Metropolitan Borough of Bermondsey; Commercial Gas Company; Timber Trade Federation of the United Kingdom (London Section) and others; London Chamber of Commerce; Pilots on the River Thames; Master Lightermen and Barge-owners, Wharfingers, Coal Merchants, and Granary Keepers on the River Thames; Midland Railway Company; London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway Company; Hertfordshire County Council; Gas Light and Coke Company; Berkshire County Council; Holders of Debenture Stock of the Surrey Commercial Dock Company; Corporation of London; Surrey Commercial Dock Company; Poplar Borough Council; London Trades Council; London Grain Elevator Company, Limited; Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of the City of Rochester; and Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the County Borough of West Ham; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill 623

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Ynysybwl; Dundee; and Saltash; to lie upon the Table 624

PUBLIC HOUSES (HOURS OF CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Glasgow, in favour; to lie upon the Table 624

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.—Petition from Accrington, for alteration of law; to lie upon the Table 624

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RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES (IRELAND).—Return [presented 10th June] to be printed. [No. 198] 624

LUNATIC ASYLUMS (IRELAND).—Return [presented 10th June] to be printed. [No. 199] 624

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND).—Copy of Twenty first Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland, being for the year 1902. Part III. Scientific Investigations [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 624

EAST INDIA (CORONATION OF HIS MAJESTY).—Copy presented, of Account of the Durbar held at Delhi on the 1st January, 1903, in celebration of the Coronation of His Majesty King Edward VII. [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 624

TECHNICAL EDUCATION (APPLICATION OF FUNDS BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES).—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 28th July, 1902—*Sir John Gorst*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 200.] 624

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1884.—Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 8th June, 1903, declaring that Alfred Robinson, Artificer, Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield, was appointed without a Civil Service Certificate, through inadvertence on the part of the Head of his Department [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 624

SINKING FUNDS.—Account presented, of the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt, showing the amount received and applied in the year ended 31st March, 1903, in respect of the Old and New Sinking Funds [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 201.] 625

ARKLOW HARBOUR.—Copy presented, of Report of the Arklow Harbour Commissioners and Statement of Accounts for 1902 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 625

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 1) BILL [LORDS].—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 8th June—*Mr. Bonar Law*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 202.] 625

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 2) BILL.—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 8th June—*Mr. Bonar Law*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 203.] 625

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 3) BILL.—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 8th June—*Mr. Bonar Law*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 204.] 625

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 4) BILL.—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 8th June—*Mr. Bonar Law*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 205.] 625

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 5) BILL.—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 8th June—*Mr. Bonar Law*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 206.] 625

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 6) BILL.—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 8th June—*Mr. Bonar Law*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 207.] 626

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HARWICH HARBOUR.—Copy presented, of Abstract of the Accounts of the Receipts and Expenditure of the Harwich Harbour Conservancy Board from the time of their incorporation down to and inclusive of the 31st March, 1903, etc. [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 208.] 626

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).—Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2991 to 2993 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 626

TRADE REPORTS (MISCELLANEOUS SERIES).—Copy presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Miscellaneous Series, No. 592 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 626

TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANKS, 1902.—Returns ordered, "(1) from each Savings Bank in England and Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and the Channel Islands, containing, in columns, the names of the officers, their respective salaries, and other allowances, if any; the amount of security each gives; the annual expenses of management, inclusive of all payments and salaries, for the year ended the 20th day of November, 1902; the rate per centum per annum on the capital of the Bank for the expenses of management; the rate of interest paid to Depositors on the various amounts of deposit, and the average rate of interest on all accounts; the number of accounts remaining open; the total amount owing to Depositors; the total amount invested with the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt; the balance in the hands of the Treasurer at the 20th day of November, 1902; the total amount of the separate Surplus Fund on the 20th day of November, 1902; other assets, including estimated value of Bank premises, furniture, etc.; the total assets; the total amount of Government Stock standing to the credit of Depositors; the number and amount of annuities granted; and the average cost of each transaction; also the year in which business commenced in each Bank, and the name of the day or days, and the number of hours in the week, on which the Banks are open for the deposit and withdrawal of moneys; including in such Return a list of all such Savings Banks as, under the provisions of the Act 26 Vic. c. 14, or otherwise, have been closed and have transferred their funds, or any part thereof, to the Post Office Savings Banks; showing, in each case, the number of such Banks, as well as the number and amount of Depositors' accounts so transferred, and the amount of compensation, if any, made to all or any of the officers of such Banks respectively; and showing also the years in which such Banks were respectively opened and closed, and the number and amount of their Depositors' balances, and the number of days and hours in each week on which the same Banks were open for public business at the close of the year next preceding the date of such closing; distinguishing the same, as in the Return, for each separate county, as well as collectively, for England and Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and the Channel Islands, and for the United Kingdom: and (2) for the year ending the 20th day of November, 1902, showing the total number of Depositors in Trustee Savings Banks; the total number of deposits; the average amount of each deposit account: the average sums paid in and drawn out; the total number of persons who have deposited in single sums the entire amount allowed to be deposited during the year (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 267, of Session 1902)."—(*Mr. Mount.*) 626

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LAND REVENUE OF INDIA.—Questions, Mr. Weir; Answers, Lord George Hamilton 627

INTERCOMMUNICATION BETWEEN PASSENGERS AND GUARDS ON INDIAN RAILWAYS.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, Lord George Hamilton 628

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INDIAN STATE RAILWAYS—NATIVE OFFICIALS.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, Lord George Hamilton... 629

LIMITATION OF ARMY ORDER 9, OF JANUARY, 1903.—Question, Mr. John Hutton (Yorkshire, Richmond); Answer, Lord George Hamilton 629

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CORN DUTY—REBATE TO MILLERS.—Question, Mr. Philip Foster (Warwickshire, Stratford-upon-Avon); Answer, Mr. Ritchie 631

SWINE FEVER IN ESSEX.—Question, Mr. Round (Essex, Harwich); Answer, Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes 631

WALMER BARRACKS — DISCHARGE OF SEWAGE.—Question, Mr. Harwood (Bolton); Answer, Mr. Pretyman 631

COST OF REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, ETC., IN IRELAND.—Question, Mr. William Abraham (Cork Co., N.E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 632

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AUSTRO-HUNGARY—PROPOSED INCREASED TARIFF ON BRITISH MACHINERY.—Question, Mr. Seymour Ormsby-Gore (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough); Answer, Lord Cranborne … … .. … … … … 638

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"PASSIVE RESISTANCE" IN DERBYSHIRE.—Question, Mr. Mansfield; Answer, Mr. Walter Long … … … … … … … … 643

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NSPECTION OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES—IRELAND.—Questions, Mr. Hayden (Roscommon, S.), and Mr. Cullinan (Tipperary, S.); Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) … … … … 646

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DENUNCIATION OF THE GERMAN COMMERCIAL TREATY.—Question, Sir Walter Foster (Derbyshire, Ilkeston); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 649

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.—Question, Mr. O'Shaughnessy (Limerick, W.); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 649

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NEW BILL.

Guinea Postal Orders Bill.—"To enable the Postmaster General to issue Postal Orders of the value of twenty-one shillings," presented by Mr. Henniker Heaton; supported by Mr. John Redmond, Mr. Henry Norman, Mr. Paulton, Sir John Blundell Maple, Mr. Evelyn Cecil, and Sir Thomas Dewar; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 242.]

SUPPLY [12TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903-04—CLASS II.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £136,907, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and expenses of the Local Government Board."

Sir Walter Foster (*Derbyshire, Ilkeston*) 652
Dr. Farquharson (*Aberdeenshire, W.*) 659
Mr. Flower (*Bradford, W.*) 662
Mr. Crooks (*Woolwich*) 667
Mr. Toulmin (*Lancashire, Bury*) 671
Sir Francis Powell (*Wigan*) 675
Mr. Tennant (*Berwickshire*) 677
Sir John Gorst (*Cambridge University*) 680
Mr. Cameron (*Durham, Houghton-le-Spring*) 684
Mr. T. W. Russell (*Tyrone, S.*) 685
Mr. Channing (*Northamptonshire, E.*) 688
The President of the Local Government Board (*Mr. Walter Long, Bristol, S.*) 691

SPEED OF MOTOR CARS.

Mr. Cathcart Wason (Orkney and Shetland) ... 697

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item A (Salaries) be reduced by £100, in respect of the Salary of the President of the Board."—(*Mr. Cathcart Wason.*)

Mr. Harwood (Bolton) ... 698
Mr. Scott Montagu (Hampshire, New Forest) ... 700
Sir H. Meysey-Thompson (Staffordshire, Handsworth) ... 701
Mr. Nussey (Pontefract) ... 702
Sir Frederick Banbury (Camberwell, Peckham) ... 702
Mr. Seely (Lincoln) ... 703
Mr. Pirie (Aberdeen, N.) ... 704
Mr. Spear (Devonshire, Tavistock) ... 704

And, it being half-past Seven of the Clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

SUPPLY [12TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee:—

(In the Committee.)

[MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903–4.—CLASS II.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £136,907, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Local Government Board."

Whereupon Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item A (Salaries) be reduced by £100, in respect of the Salary of the President of the Board."—(*Mr. Cathcart Wason.*)

Mr. Spear ... 705
Mr. Soares (Devonshire, Barnstaple) ... 706
Mr. Pike Pease (Darlington) ... 707
Sir Brampton Gurdon (Norfolk, N.) ... 708
General Laurie (Pembroke and Haverfordwest) ... 708
Mr. Theodore Taylor (Lancashire, Radcliffe) ... 709
Mr. Bull (Hammersmith) ... 710
Mr. Cawley (Lancashire, Prestwich) ... 711
Mr. Murray (Coventry) ... 711
Mr. Charles Allen (Gloucestershire, Stroud) ... 712
Mr. Fitzroy (Northamptonshire, S.) ... 712
Mr. Louis Sinclair (Essex, Romford) ... 713
Mr. Cullinan (Tipperary, S.) ... 715
Mr. Walter Long ... 716
Mr. Chaplin (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) ... 721

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

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Hastings Harbour District Railway Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons 742

Burgess Hill and St. John's Common Gas Bill; Scarborough Gas Bill; Sittingbourne District Gas Bill.—Read 3^a, and passed 742

Rochester Corporation Tramways and Improvement Bill [H.L.]; North-Western Electricity and Power Gas Bill [H.L.]; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Fife Electric Power Bill [H.L.]; Liverpool University Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons 742

Barry Railway Bill [H.L.]; Didcot, Newbury, and Southampton Railway Bill [H.L.]; Taff Vale Railway Bill [H.L.]; Willesden Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]; Scottish American Mortgage Company, Limited, Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons 743

Midland Railway Bill.—Read 3^a, with the Amendments; further Amendments made; Bill passed, and returned to the Commons 743

Winchester Water and Gas Bill.—Read 3^a, with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons 743

South Wales Mineral Railway Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to 743

Cleveland and Durham County Electric Power Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with an Amendment. The said Amendment considered, and agreed to 743

Indiarubber, Guttapercha, and Telegraph Works Company Bill [H.L.]; Milford Docks Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments; the said Amendments considered, and agreed to 743

Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Bill [H.L.]; Wellington (Salop) Gas Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments 743

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 2) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill.—House in Committee (according to Order); Bills reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bills to be read 3^a on Monday next... 743

North British Railway (General Powers) Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 743

Lanarkshire and Ayrshire Railway Order Confirmation Bill.—Read 3^a (according to Order), and passed 743

St. Luke's Church and Parish Quoad Sacra Edinburgh Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 744

Dundee Royal Lunatic Asylum Orders Confirmation Bill.—Read 3^a (according to Order), and passed 744

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PETITION.

LAND REGISTERS SCOTLAND BILL [H.L.]—Petition against; of Procurators of Dumfriesshire; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 744

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

No. 2994. Denmark.
No. 2995. Corea. 744

COLONIES (ANNUAL).—No. 386. Falkland Islands: Report for 1902.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 744

HARWICH HARBOUR.—Abstract of the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the Harwich Harbour Conservancy Board from the time of their incorporation down to and inclusive of the 31st March, 1903. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 744

A QUESTION OF PRECEDENT.

The Earl of Wemyss 744
The Secretary for Scotland (*Lord Balfour of Burleigh*) 744

MUNICIPAL TRADING.

Lord Balfour of Burleigh 745

Moved, That the Lords following be named of the Committee to join with a Committee of the House of Commons on Municipal Trading, viz.:—E. Crewe, L. Zouche, L. Barnard, L. Brougham and Vaux, L. Aberdare, L. Lamington, L. Rothschild.—(*Lord Balfour of Burleigh, for The Duke of Devonshire.*)

The Chairman of Committees (*The Earl of Morley*) 745

On Question, Motion agreed to.

Ordered, That such Committee have power to agree with the Committee of the House of Commons in the appointment of a Chairman.

Then a Message was ordered to be sent to the House of Commons in answer to their said Message to inform them of the appointment of the said Committee by the House, and to propose that the Joint Committee do meet in Committee Room B, on Monday next at Three o'clock.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.—Moved, That the Lords following be named of the Committee to join with a Committee of the House of Commons, viz.:—V. Cross, L. Wolverton, L. Brassey, L. Hawkesbury, L. Ludlow.—(*Lord Balfour of Burleigh, for The Duke of Devonshire.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

Ordered, That such Committee have power to agree with the Committee of the House of Commons in the appointment of a Chairman.

Then a Message was ordered to be sent to the House of Commons in answer to their said Message to inform them of the appointment of the said Committee by this House, and to propose that the Joint Committee do meet in Committee Room A, on Thursday next at half-past Two o'clock. ... 746

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REDEMPTION AND PURCHASE OF QUIT AND CROWN RENTS IN IRELAND.

Lord Castletown 747

Moved, for a Return showing all sums received for the redemption and purchase of quit and Crown rents in Ireland since 1897, and how the capital sum has been disposed of.—(*Lord Castletown.*)

Earl of Denbigh 749
Earl Spencer 749

Motion (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL'S EXPENDITURE IN PROMOTING AND OPPOSING BILLS IN PARLIAMENT.—

Earl of Camperdown 750

Moved, For a Return, in the following form, of all expenses incurred by the London County Council (A.) promoting and (B.) opposing Bills in Parliament in each session up to and including that for the year 1902:—

A.

Session.	Titles of Bills promoted by the Council.	Amount expended by the Council in promoting each such Bill, with total for each Session.		Whether such Bill passed into Law.
		Total for each Bill.	Total for each Session.	
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	

B.

Session.	Titles of Bills opposed by the Council.	Amount expended by the Council in opposing each such Bill, with total for each Session.		Result of the Council's opposition.
		Total for each Bill.	Total for each Session.	
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	

—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

Coal Mines (Certificates) Bill.—House in Committee (according to Order); Bill reported without Amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee 751

Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Amendment) Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª (according to Order); An Amendment (privilege) made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons 751

MUNICIPAL TRADING.—Message from the Commons that they have ordered that the Committee appointed by them to join with the Committee of this House to consider the question of municipal trading do meet the Lords Committee in Committee Room B. on Monday next at three o'clock, as proposed by their Lordships 751

Port of London Bill.—Message from the Commons that they have ordered that the Committee appointed by them to join with the Committee of this House to consider the port of London Bill do meet the Lords Committee in Committee Room A on Thursday next at half-past two o'clock, as proposed by their Lordships 752

House adjourned at Five o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: FRIDAY, 12TH JUNE, 1903.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords and referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, viz.—

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time upon Monday next 753

Caledonian Railway Order Confirmation Bill; Edinburgh Corporation (Markets, Slaughter Houses, etc.) Order Confirmation Bill; Grangemouth Water Order Confirmation Bill; Lanarkshire Electricity and Refuse Destruction Order Confirmation Bill.—Considered to be read the third time upon Monday next 753

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP F).—Ordered, That James Lougheed Rowlett do attend the Committee on Group F of Private Bills on Tuesday next, at Twelve of the clock 753

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the mayor, aldermen, and citizens of the city of Exeter to construct tramways and street improvements; and for other purposes." [Exeter Corporation Bill [Lords].] 754

Exeter Corporation Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 754

Small Dwellings (Acquisition) Bill.—Second Reading upon Friday next... 754

Local Government Provisional Orders (No 10) Bill.—Reported without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table. Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next 754

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Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 12) Bill—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table. Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next 754

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 14) Bill.—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table. Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next 754

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 16) Bill.—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table. Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next 754

Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) Bill.—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table. Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next 754

Wirral Railway Bill [LORDS]; Rickmansworth Gas Bill [Lords]; Harrogate Water Bill [Lords]. Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 754

PETITIONS.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.—Petitions against: from Cuckfield; and Swindon; to lie upon the Table 754

COUNTY COUNCILS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petition from Barrow-in-Furness, in favour; to lie upon the Table 755

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN BILL.—Petition from Edinburgh, for alteration; to lie upon the Table 755

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL.—Petition from North Shields, against; to lie upon the Table 755

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.—Petitions against: from Stirling; Greasbro' and North Shields; to lie upon the Table ... 755

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petition from Hawick, for alteration; to lie upon the Table 755

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.—Petitions against: from Cuckfield; and Bury-St.-Edmunds; to lie upon the Table 755

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL.—Petitions in favour: from Irvine and Fullarton; Leeds; Alloa; Barrow; Castle Howard; and Mansfield and Sutton; to lie upon the Table... 755

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.—Petition from Barrow-in-Furness, for alteration of law; to lie upon the Table 755

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

SCHOOL BOARD SWIMMING BATHS.—Question, Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton); Answer, Sir William Anson 755

POLICE AND MOTOR CARS.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 756

UNDERGROUND PIPES AND WIRES—EXCAVATION OF STREETS.—Questions, Sir Thomas Dewar (Tower Hamlets, St. George's); Answers, Mr. Akers Douglas 756

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Vaccination Prosecutions at Gainsborough.—Question, Mr. Seymour Ormsby-Gore (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough); Answer, Mr. Walter Long ... 757

Pay of Royal Army Medical Corps in India.—Question, Mr. Seymour Ormsby-Gore; Answer, Lord George Hamilton 758

Erection of Buoy on Sand-bar at Ballycarbery (County Kerry).—Question, Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 758

Boatslip at Cooscroum (County Kerry).—Question, Mr. Boland; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 759

Religious Papers in Belfast Police Barracks.—Question, Mr. MacVeagh, (Down, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham... 759

Labourers' Cottages in the Moira (County Down) Rural District.—Question, Mr. MacVeagh; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 759

Grocers and Army Canteen Tenders.—Question, Sir Thomas Dewar; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 760

Finance Bill.—[Second Reading.]—Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question (9th June), "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

Mr. Joseph Walton (Yorkshire, W.R., Barnsley) 760
Mr. Cohen (Islington, E.) 774
Mr. Edmund Robertson (Dundee)... 780
Sir Edgar Vincent (Exeter) 788
Major Evans Gordon (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) 797
Mr. Moon (St. Pancras) 800
Mr. Black (Banffshire) 801
Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis) 804
Mr. Sydney Buxton (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) 814
The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir M. Hicks Beach, Bristol, W.) ... 817

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

Outdoor Relief (Pensioners) Bill.—[Third Reading].—Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

Mr. Caldwell (Lanarkshire, Mid) 829

And it being half-past Five of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Tuesday next.

Education (Borrowing) Bill.—As amended, considered; read the third time, and passed 830

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RAILWAYS (ELECTRICAL POWER) EXPENSES.

Resolution reported—"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of the remuneration of any persons appointed by the Board of Trade for the purposes of any Act of the present session to facilitate the introduction and use of electric power on railways, and any other expenses incurred by the Board of Trade in carrying such Act into effect."

Resolution agreed to … … … … … … … … 830

NEW BILLS.

LIGHT LOCOMOTIVES (REGISTRATION) BILL.—Bill to provide for the Registration of motor vehicles and to amend the Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896, ordered to be bought in by Mr. Scott-Montagu, Mr. Arthur Stanley, Mr. Bull, Mr. Murray, Mr. Norman, Mr. Harmsworth, and Mr. T. P. O'Connor.

Light Locomotives (Registration) Bill.—"To provide for the Registration of motor vehicles and to amend the Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 23rd June, and to be printed. [Bill 243.] … … … 831

IRISH LAND [ADVANCES, ETC.]—Committee to consider of authorising the creation of Capital Stock for raising money for the purposes of any Act of the present session to amend the Law relating to the occupation and ownership of land in Ireland, of authorising the payment out of the Consolidated Fund, Salaries, Superannuation Allowances, and certain other expenses payFund and out of money to be provided by Parliament, of Dividends, Sinking able under such Act (King's Recommendation signified), upon Monday next. (*Mr. Wyndham.*) … … … … … … … … 831

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—Municipal Trading: That they have appointed a Committee consisting of seven Lords to join with a Committee of the Commons, pursuant to Message of this House, "to consider and report as to the principles which should govern powers given by Bills and Provisional Orders to municipal and other local authorities for industrial enterprise within or without the area of their jurisdiction," and propose that the said Joint Committee do meet in Committee Room B, on Monday next, at Three o'clock.

Lords' Message considered.

Ordered: That the Committee of this House do meet the Lords' Committee as proposed by their Lordships.

Message to the Lords to aquaint them therewith.

Port of London Bill: That they have appointed a Committee consisting of five Lords to join with a Committee of the Commons, pursuant to Message of this House, for the consideration of the Port of London Bill, and propose that the said Joint Committee do meet in Committee Room A, on Thursday next, at half-past Two o'clock.

Lords' Message considered.

Ordered: That the Committee of this House do meet the Lords' Committee as proposed by their Lordships.

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith … … … 831

Adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Six o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS, MONDAY, 15TH JUNE, 1903.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE. The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that His Majesty had (by Commission) appointed the Earl Waldegrave Speaker of the House in the absence of the Lord Chancellor or Lord Keeper, the Earl of Morley, the Earl of Cork and Orrery, the Earl de Montalt, and the Earl of Halsbury; and the Lord Ribblesdale Speaker of the House in the absence of the Lord Chancellor or Lord Keeper, the Earl of Morley, the Earl of Cork and Orrery, the Earl de Montalk, the Earl of Halsbury, and the Earl Waldegrave: The said Commissions were read ... 833

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with: Naval Works Provisional Order; Local Government Provisional Orders (Gas); Middlesbrough Corporation; Lanarkshire and Dumbartonshire Railway; South Yorkshire Joint Railways; Wolverhampton and Cannock Chase Railway (Extension of Time); Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway (Various Powers); Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland; Great Western Railway; Woolwich Borough Council; Great Southern and Western Railway; Mullingar, Kells, and Drogheda Railway; Plymouth Corporation; Hainault Forest; London County Council (Money); Neath, Pontardawe, and Brynaman Railway; North-Eastern Railway; Wood Green Urban District Council.

And the Certificates that no further Standing Orders are applicable to the following Bills: Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 6); Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 8); Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 11).

And also the Certificates that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have not been complied with: London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway; Stroud and District Tramways; Romford and District Tramways; Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Railway; Beckenham Urban District Council.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 833

Manchester Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Supplemental Report from His Majesty's Attorney-General, received, and ordered to lie on the Table ... 834

London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway Bill.—A petition of Mr. William Howard Gray, of 63, Queen Victoria Street, London, solicitor, praying for leave to present a petition of Messrs. Frederick Boyd Brown and Charles Wells, praying to be heard by counsel against the Bill, although the time limited by Standing Order No. 93 for presenting such petition has expired; read, and ordered to lie on the Table; and Standing Order No. 93 to be considered to-morrow in order to its being dispensed with in respect of the said petition 834

Gas Light and Coke Company Bill; Great Eastern Railway Bill; Bournemouth Gas and Water Bill [H.L.]. Committee to meet on Thursday next 834

Manchester Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Select Committee, that the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, no parties having appeared in opposition thereto; read, and ordered to lie on the Table: The orders made on 23rd March and 25th May last discharged, and Bill committed 834

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Market Drayton Gas Bill; Read 3ª, and passed 834

Chatham and District Light Railways Bill [H.L.]: Read 3ª; Amendments made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons 834

Dover Corporation Bill; Merthyr Tydvil Urban District Council Bill; Wigan Corporation Tramways Bill. Brought from the Commons; read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners... 834

Metropolitan District Railway (Various Powers) Bill; London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway Bill; Beckenham Urban District Council Bill; Stroud and District Tramways Bill; Romford and District Tramways Bill; Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Railway Bill.—Examiners' Certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Tuesday the 23rd instant 835

Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]; Gas and Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.]; Charing Cross, Euston, and Hampstead Railway Bill; City and South London Railway Bill; Great Northern Railway Bill; Great Central Railway Bill; London County Council (General Powers) Bill; Walker and Wallsend Union Gas Bill; New Hunstanton Improvement Bill; Lancashire and Yorkshire and London and North-Western Railways (Steam Vessels) Bill.—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; (viz.)—

D. Wellington,
E. Malmesbury,
E. Belmore (chairman),
E. Powis,
L. Manners;

agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly: The Committee to meet on Tuesday the 23rd instant, at eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills 835

Manchester Southern Tramways (Lancashire) Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 835

ellington (Salop) Gas Bill [H.L.].—Commons' Amendments considered, and agreed to 835

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill.—To be read 2ª to-morrow. —(*The Lord Wolverton.*)

Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]; Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]; Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.]. House to be in Committee to-morrow 836

PRIVATE AND PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILLS.—Ordered, That Standing Orders Nos. 72 and 82 be suspended for the remainder of the session 836

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 2) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill.—Read 3ª (according to Order) and passed 836

PETITIONS.

LAND REGISTERS (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.].—Petition against: of Messrs. Millar and Bryce; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 836

SHOPS (EARLY CLOSING) BILL [H.L.]. -Petition in favour of: of the National Chamber of Trade; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 836

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

LOCAL TAXATION ACCOUNT (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1898.—Return showing the postal payments into and out of the Local Taxation (Scotland) Account for the financial year 1902–1903 836

COLONIES (ANNUAL)—No. 387. Gibraltar; Report for 1902 836

AUSTRALIAN MAIL SERVICE.—Despatch to the Governor-General of Australia relating to the exclusive employment of white labour 836

EXPLOSIVES (EXPLOSIONS OF GUNPOWDER AT SEDGWICK, NEAR KENDAL).—Report to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Home Department by Captain H. B. Lloyd, His Majesty's Inspector of Explosives, on the circumstances attending explosions of gunpowder which occurred in the glazing and corning houses of the factory of the Sedgwick Gunpowder Company, Limited, at Sedgwick, near Kendal, Westmoreland, on the 30th of March, 1903 836

ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND.—Annual Report for the year 1902 837

DUBLIN HOSPITALS.—Forty-fifth Report of the Board of Superintendence; with appendices, for the year 1902–3. 837

NAVY (BERTHING ACCOMMODATION).—Report of the Committee appointed by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to consider the question of the berthing accommodation for His Majesty's ships in the dockyards and other waters, and also the moorings and material required.

Presented [by Command], and ordered to lie on the Table 837

DISEASES OF ANIMALS ACT, 1894 AND 1896.—Fourteen orders relating to the landing of foreign animals in Great Britain.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 837

THE FISCAL POLICY OF THE COUNTRY.

Viscount Goschen 837
The Earl of Crewe 853
Lord Avebury 862
The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (The Marquess of Lansdowne) 868
The Marquess of Ripon 879
The Earl of Mayo 885
Lord Brassey 888
The Earl of Jersey 893
The Secretary for Scotland (Lord Balfour of Burleigh) 895
Earl Spencer 898
The Lord President of the Council (The Duke of Devonshire) 906

NEW BILL.

Bishoprics of Southwark and Birmingham Bill [H.L.].—A Bill to provide for the constitution of Bishoprics of Southwark and Birmingham, and for matters incidental thereto— Was presented by the Lord Belper; read 1ª, to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Friday next. (No. 104.) 921

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Education (Borrowing) Bill.—Brought from the Commons. Read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Tuesday, the 23rd instant.—(*The Lord Kenyon.*) (No. 105.) 921

Union of Benefices Act, 1860, Amendment Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons. 921

House adjourned at ten minutes past Twelve o'clock a.m. till half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MONDAY, 15TH JUNE, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

MILITARY MANŒUVRES (ORDER IN COUNCIL).—The COMPTROLLER OF THE HOUSEHOLD reported His Majesty's Answer to the Address of the 18th May 921

Chew's Foundation.—The COMPTROLLER OF THE HOUSEHOLD reported His Majesty's Answer to the Address of the 28th April 921

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills. That, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz. :—

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time to-morrow 922

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz. :—

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (East Ham, etc.) Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time to-morrow 922

ELECTRIC LIGHTING (LONDON) BILL [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, pursuant to the Order of the House of the 11th day of June, That, in the case of the following Bill, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz. :—

Electric Lighting (London) Bill [Lords] 923

Dover Corporation Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 923

Knott End Railway (Extension of Time) Bill [LORDS].—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment 923

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Merthyr Tydfil Urban District Council Bill; Wigan Corporation Tramways Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 923

Aston Manor Improvement Bill [Lords]; British Gas Light Company (Norwich) Bill [Lords]; Cardiff Railway Bill [Lords]; Chard Corporation Gas and Electricity Bill [Lords]; Dewsbury, Batley, and Birstal Tramways Bill [Lords]; Hastings Tramways (Extensions) Bill [Lords]; Jewish Colonisation Association Bill [Lords]; King's College, London, Bill [Lords]; London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Bill [Lords]; Pontypridd Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; Port Talbot Railway and Docks Bill [Lords]; Preston, Chorley, and Horwich Tramways Bill [Lords]; St. Philip's Chapel (Regent Street) Bill [Lords]; Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation Bill [Lords]; South Lancashire Tramways Bill [Lords]; Torquay Corporation Water Bill [Lords]; Tynemouth and District Tramways Bill [Lords]; Worthing Corporation (Tramways) Bill [Lords].—Read a second time, and committed 923

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 10) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 12) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 14) Bill; Local Government Provisional Order (No. 16) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 923

Caledonian Railway Order Confirmation Bill; Edinburgh Corporation (Markets, Slaughter Houses, &c.) Order Confirmation Bill; Grangemouth Water Order Confirmation Bill; Lanarkshire Electricity and Refuse Destruction Order Confirmation Bill.—Read the third time, and passed ... 924

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [Lords].—Read a second time, and committed 925

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to—Lanarkshire and Ayrshire Railway Order Confirmation Bill; Dundee Royal Lunatic Asylum Order Confirmation Bill; Burgess Hill and St. John's Common Gas Bill; Scarborough Gas Bill; Sittingbourne District Gas Bill, without Amendment.

Midland Railway Bill, Winchester Water and Gas Bill, with Amendments.

Amendment to—Cleveland and Durham County Electric Power Bill [Lords].

Amendments to—India Rubber, Gutta Percha, and Telegraph Works Company Bill [Lords], without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, 1894." [Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Amendment) Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confirm a Provisional Order under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to the North British Railway." [North British Railway (General Powers) Order Confirmation Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confirm a Provisional Order under The Private Legislation Procedure Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to St. Luke's Church and Parish Quoad Sacra, Edinburgh." [St. Luke's Church and Parish Quoad Sacra, Edinburgh, Order Confirmation Bill (Lords).]

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Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Hastings Harbour District Railway Company to construct deviation railways and new railways; to raise additional capital; and for other purposes." [Hastings Harbour District Railway Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of the city of Rochester to construct tramways and street improvements; and for other purposes." [Rochester Corporation Tramways and Improvements Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for incorporating and conferring powers on the North Western Electricity and Power-Gas Company; and for other purposes." [North Western Electricity and Power-Gas Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to incorporate the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Company, and to empower that Company to make and maintain tramways and other works in the counties of Nottingham and Derby; and for other purposes." [Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for incorporating and conferring powers on the Fife Electric Power Company." [Fife Electric Power Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to separate University College, Liverpool, from the Victoria University, and to merge it in the University of Liverpool when constituted; and to transfer all the property and liabilities of the said University College to the University of Liverpool when constituted; and for other purposes." [Liverpool University Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to extend the time for the completion of certain railways by the Barry Railway Company; to confirm an agreement between the Company and certain landowners; to empower the Company to raise additional capital, and for other purposes." [Barry Railway Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confer further powers on the Didcot, Newbury, and Southampton Railway Company." [Didcot, Newbury, and Southampton Railway Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for extending the time for the purchase of certain lands and completion of certain railways by the Taff Vale Railway Company; for enabling the company to work their railways by electrical power; and for other purposes." [Taff Vale Railway Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confer powers on the Urban District Council of Willesden with respect to their electric lighting undertaking and recreation grounds, streets, buildings, sanitary, and other matters for the good government of their district; and to transfer to them the powers of the Vestry of the Parish of Willesden; and for other purposes." [Willesden Urban District Council Bill (Lords).]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to enable the Scottish American Mortgage Company, Limited, to create preference stock; to enlarge its powers; and for other purposes." [Scottish American Mortgage Company, Limited, Bill (Lords).]

Hastings Harbour District Railway Bill [LORDS]; Rochester Corporation Tramways and Improvements Bill [Lords]; North Western Electricity and Power Gas Bill [Lords]; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill [Lords]; Fife Electric Power Bill [Lords]; Liverpool University Bill [Lords]; Barry Railway Bill [Lords]; Didcot, Newbury, and Southampton Railway Bill [Lords]; Taff Vale Railway Bill [Lords]; Willesden Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; Scottish American Mortgage Company, Limited, Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 926

St. Luke's Church and Quoad Sacra, Edinburgh, Order Confirmation Bill [LORDS].—To be considered to-morrow 926

North British Railway (General Powers) Order Confirmation Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 23rd June, and to be printed. [Bill 245.] 926

PETITIONS.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.—Petition from Liverpool, against; to lie upon the Table 927

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petition from Macclesfield, in favour: to lie upon the Table 927

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petitions in favour: from Wiston and Roberton; and Avondale; to lie upon the Table 927

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN BILL.—Petition from Forres, for alteration: to lie upon the Table 927

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.—Petitions against: from North Derbyshire; and Barnard Castle; to lie upon the Table ... 927

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL.—Petitions against: from North Derbyshire; and Barnard Castle; to lie upon the Table 927

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petition from Inverness, for alterations: to lie upon the Table 927

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL.—Petition from Leicester, in favour: to lie upon the Table 927

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.—Petitions for alteration of law: from Bootle; and Macclesfield; to lie upon the Table 927

PORT OF LONDON BILL.—Petition from Chatham Corporation, against (praying to be heard by Counsel): to lie upon the Table 927

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EXPLOSIONS (EXPLOSION OF GUNPOWDER AT SEDGWICK, NEAR KENDAL).—Copy presented, of Report by Captain M. B. Lloyd, His Majesty's Inspector of Explosives, to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on the circumstances attending explosions of gunpowder which occurred in the glazing and corning houses of the Factory of the Sedgwick Gunpowder Company, Limited, at Sedgwick, near Kendal, Westmoreland, on the 30th March, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table... 927

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LOCAL TAXATION ACCOUNT (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1898. — Copy presented, of Return showing the Total Payments into and out of the Local Taxation (Scotland) Account for the financial year 1902–3 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 928

DUBLIN HOSPITALS.—Copy presented, of Forty-fifth Report of the Board of Superintendence, with Appendices, for the year 1902–3 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 928

ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND.—Copy presented, of Twenty-first Report of the Royal University of Ireland, being for the year 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 928

DISEASES OF ANIMALS ACTS, 1894 AND 1896.—Copies presented, of Fourteen Orders relating to the landing in Great Britain of Foreign Animals [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 928

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).—Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos 2994 and 2995 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 928

AUSTRALIAN MAIL SERVICE.—Copy presented, of Despatch to the Governor-General of Australia relating to the Exclusive Employment of White Labour [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 928

COLONIAL REPORTS (ANNUAL).—Copies presented, of Colonial Reports, Nos. 386 (Falkland Islands, Annual Report for 1902) and 387 (Gibraltar, Annual Report for 1902) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 928

NAVY (BERTHING ACCOMMODATION).—Copy presented, of Report of the Committee appointed by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to consider the question of the Berthing Accommodation for His Majesty's Ships in the dockyards and other waters, and also the moorings and material required [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 929

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

IMPORTATION OF MILK.—Question, Sir Edward Strachey (Somersetshire, E.); Answer, Mr. Arthur Elliot 929

LIFE-SAVING PRECAUTIONS ON BOARD SHIP.—Question, Sir Howard Vincent (Sheffield, Central); Answer, Mr. Bonar Law 929

PRESERVATION OF BIG GAME IN AFRICA.—Question, Sir H. Seton-Karr (St. Helens); Answer, Lord Cranborne 930

TREATMENT OF JEWS IN ROUMANIA.— Question, Major Evans Gordon (Tower Hamlets, Stepney); Answer, Lord Cranborne 931

ISSUE OF SILVER COINAGE.—Question, Sir John Leng (Dundee); Answer, Mr. Ritchie 932

INDIA—EXAMINATION OF PACKAGES CROSSING THE TIBETAN FRONTIER.—Question, Mr. Herbert Roberts (Denbighshire, W.); Answer, Lord George Hamilton 932

IMPORTATION OF CANADIAN CATTLE.—Question, The Master of Elibank (Edinburgh, Midlothian); Answer, Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes 932

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NEW ROAD FROM THE MALL TO CHARING CROSS.—Question, Mr. Whitmore (Chelsea); Answer, Mr. Victor Cavendish 933

EXPERIMENTS ON DOGS WITHOUT ANÆSTHETICS.—Question, Mr. Perks (Lincolnshire, Louth); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas... 933

HOOLIGANISM IN THE METROPOLIS.—Question, Mr. Schwann; Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 934

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INQUIRY INTO CONDITION OF IRISH BLIND.—Question, Mr. Nannetti (Dublin, College Green); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 937

SALARY OF MANUAL INSTRUCTRESSES IN IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOLS.—Question, Mr. Gilhooly (Cork Co., W.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 937

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BOER GRIEVANCES.—Question, Mr. John Ellis (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe); Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 942

DYNAMITE DUTY IN SOUTH AFRICA.—Question, Mr. Markham (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield); Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 942

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ALLEGED ILL-TREATMENT OF INDIAN STORE-KEEPERS IN SOUTH AFRICA.—Question, Mr. Markham; Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 943

IRRIGATION WORKS IN INDIA.—Question, Mr. Herbert Roberts (Denbighshire, W.); Answer, The Secretary of State for India (Lord George Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing) 943

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SHANGHAI-NANKING RAILWAY. Question, Mr. Herbert Roberts; Answer, Lord Cranborne 945

THE ASSASSINATIONS IN SERVIA.—Question, Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis); Answer, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 946

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EDINBURGH MAGISTRATES AND THE WELLINGTON REFORMATORY.—Question, Mr. John Dewar (Inverness-shire); Answer, The Solicitor-General for Scotland (Mr. Scott Dickson, Glasgow, Bridgton) 949

GALWAY DOCKS.—Question, Mr. Charles Devlin (Galway); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) 950

COROFIN DISTRICT COUNCIL CHAIRMANSHIP.—Questions, Mr. William Redmond; Answers, Mr. Wyndham 951

PROPOSED PIER AT SALTHILL, GALWAY.—Question, Mr. Charles Devlin; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 951

IRISH AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS.—Question, Mr. Carew (Meath, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 952

IRISH TRADE STATISTICS.—Questions, Mr. Lough and Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, Mr. Bonar Law 952

CHARITABLE LOAN FUND (IRELAND) ACT, 1900.—Question, Mr. John Campbell (Armagh, Mid); Answer, The Attorney-General for Ireland (Mr. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.) 953

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RAILWAY DELIVERY OF IRISH BUTTER AROUND LONDON. — Question, Mr. Joyce (Limerick); Answer, Mr. Bonar Law 953

GREENWICH HOSPITAL FUND PENSIONS. —Question, Mr. Kearley (Devonport); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 954

INQUIRY INTO PREFERENTIAL TARIFFS.—Questions, Mr. Labouchere (Northampton), Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs), Mr. Trevelyan (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland), and Sir Wilfrid Lawson (Cornwall, Camborne); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 954

NEW MEMBER SWORN.—Denis Kilbride, Esq., for the County of Kildare (South Kildare Division) 956

MUNICIPAL TRADING.—Ordered, That the Reports and Minutes of the evidence of the Joint Committee on Municipal Trading of Session 1900 be referred to the Select Committee appointed by this House to join with a Committee of the House of Lords on Municipal Trading.—(*Mr. Powell-Williams.*) ... 956

NEW BILL.

Congested Districts (Scotland) (No. 2.) Bill.—"To amend the provisions of the Congested Districts (Scotland) Act, 1897, as to the application of the fund constituted by the Act," presented by the Lord Advocate; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, and to be printed. [Bill 244.] 956

IRISH LAND [ADVANCES, ETC.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Resolved—That, for carrying out the provisions of any Act of the present session to amend the law relating to the occupation and ownership of land in Ireland, it is expedient—

(*a*) To authorise the creation of capital stock for raising money required for the Irish Land Purchase Fund and the Land Purchase Aid Fund, and to authorise the National Debt Commissioners to borrow and lend money for the purposes aforesaid, and to charge on the Consolidated Fund the payment of the dividends on such stock so far as not paid out of the income of the Irish Land Purchase Fund, and to authorise the payment out of money to be provided by Parliament of sums sufficient to pay the dividends and Sinking Fund required for the Land Purchase Aid Fund.

(*b*) To authorise the payment out of money to be provided by Parliament of the salaries of the Estates Commissioners, the Public Trustee, and of officers and persons employed by them, and of certain expenses of the Land Commission; and

(*c*) To authorise the payment out of the Consolidated Fund of superannuation allowances to certain Land Commissioners. —(*Mr. Wyndham.*)

Resolution to be reported to-morrow 956

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Irish Land Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. Lowther (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Clause 1.

Mr. Herbert Robertson (Hackney, S.) 957

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 8, after the words 'sale of' to insert the words 'one or more holdings, or.'"—(*Mr. Herbert Robertson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) 958
Mr. T. W. Russell (Tyrone, S.) 959
Sir John Colomb (Great Yarmouth) 959
Mr. Wyndham 959
Mr. Butcher (York) 960
Mr. Wyndham 960

Question put and negatived.

Mr. T. M. Healy (Louth, N.) 961

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 8, to leave out the word 'whether' and insert the word 'except.'"—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

Question proposed, "That the word proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

Mr. John Redmond (Waterford) 961
Mr. Wyndham 962
Mr. T. M. Healy 962

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed—

In page 1, line 11, after the word 'holding' to insert the words 'whether subject to a judicial rent or not.'"

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Wyndham 963

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Sir John Colomb 963

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 12, to leave out from the word 'then' to the first 'the' in line 14."—(*Sir John Colomb.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

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Mr. William O'Brien (Cork) ... 964
Sir John Colomb ... 965
Mr. T. W. Russell ... 965
Mr. Wyndham ... 966
Mr. T. M. Healy ... 967
Mr. Dillon (Mayo, E.) ... 968
Col. Saunderson (Armagh, N.) ... 968
Mr. Leamy (Kildare, N.) ... 969
Mr. John Redmond ... 969
Mr. Wyndham ... 970
Mr. Hemphill (Tyrone, N.) ... 972
Mr. Kilbride (Kildare, S.) ... 972
Mr. Harrington (Dublin, Harbour) ... 973
Mr. Butcher ... 974
Mr. Clancy (Dublin Co., N.) ... 975
Mr. Herbert Robertson ... 976
Mr. Emmott (Oldham) ... 977
Mr. Swift MacNeill (Donegal, S.) ... 978
Mr. O'Doherty (Donegal, N.) ... 979
Mr. Gordon (Londonderry, N.) ... 980
Mr. T. M. Healy ... 980
Mr. Coghill (Stoke-upon-Trent) ... 981
Mr. Duke (Plymouth) ... 981
Mr. Tomkinson (Cheshire, Crewe) ... 982
Major Jameson (Clare, W.) ... 982
Mr. Wyndham ... 982

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 13, after the word 'Acts' to insert the words 'as amended by this Act.'"—(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

Question, "That those words be there added," put, and agreed to.

Mr. John Redmond ... 983

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 15, to leave out from the word 'advance' to end of Sub-section (2), and insert the words 'provided that the purchase annuity payable under this Act will be, in the case of the purchase of a holding, subject to a judicial rent fixed or agreed to since the passing of the Act of 1896, not less than 15 per cent. below the existing rent, and, in the case of the purchase of a holding subject to a judicial rent fixed before that date or of a holding which is not subject to a judicial rent but the tenancy in which is one to which in the opinion of the Land Commission the Land Purchase Acts apply, not less than 25 per cent. below the existing rent."—(*Mr. John Redmond.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'or' in line 18, stand part of the clause."

Mr. Flower (Bradford, W.) ... 988
Mr. T. W. Russell ... 990
Sir John Colomb ... 996
Mr William O'Brien ... 999
Mr. Thomas Shaw (Hawick Burghs) ... 1004
Mr. Murphy (Kerry, E.) ... 1006

And, it being half-past Seven of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress ; to sit again this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

Irish Land Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Clause 1.

Another Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 15, to leave out from the word 'advance' to the end of Sub-section (2), and insert the words 'provided that the purchase annuity payable under this Act will be, in the case of the purchase of a holding, subject to a judicial rent fixed or agreed to since the passing of the Act of 1896, not less than 15 per cent. below the existing rent, and, in the case of the purchase of a holding subject to a judicial rent fixed before that date, or of a holding which is not subject to a judicial rent but the tenancy in which is one to which, in the opinion of the Land Commission, the Land Purchase Acts apply, not less than 25 per cent. below the existing rent.'"—(*Mr. John Redmond.*)

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'or,' in line 18, stand part of the Clause."

Mr. Murphy 1008
Mr. Herbert Robertson 1010
Mr. Swift MacNeill 1012
Mr. Butcher 1015
Mr. Hemphill (Tyrone, N.) 1017
Mr. Duke 1020
Dr. Thompson (Monaghan, N.) 1024
Mr. Emmott (Oldham) 1024
Mr. Cullinan (Tipperary, S.) 1026
Mr. J. P. Farrell (Longford, N.) 1028
Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.) 1031

Motion made, and Question "That the Chairman do report Progress; and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Dillon.*)

Put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

SUPPLY [11TH JUNE].

Resolution reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903-4—CLASS II.—

"That a sum, not exceeding £136,907, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and expenses of the Local Government Board."

Resolution agreed to 1035

SUPPLY [8TH JUNE, EVENING SITTING].

Resolutions reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903-4—REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £2,549,430, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and working expenses of the Post Office Telegraph Service."

CLASS IV.

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £88,619, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and other expenses of the British Museum, and of the Natural History Museum, including certain grants in aid."

3. "That a sum, not exceeding £7,027, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and expenses of the National Gallery, and of the National Gallery of British Art, Millbank, including a grant in aid for the purchase of pictures."

4. "That a sum, not exceeding £2,445, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day March, 1904, for the salaries and expenses of the National Portrait Gallery, including a grant in aid for the purchase of portraits."

5. "That a sum, not exceeding £3,281, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and expenses of the Wallace Collection (Hertford House)."

6. "That a sum, not exceeding £23,780, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for sundry grants in aid of Scientific Investigation, etc., and other grants."

7. "That a sum, not exceeding £77,100, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for grants in aid of the expenses of certain Universities and Colleges in Great Britain, and of the expenses under the Welsh Intermediate Education Act, 1889."

Resolutions agreed to 1035

Adjourned at two minutes after Twelve o'clock.

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HOUSE OF LORDS: TUESDAY, 16TH JUNE, 1903.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with: Blackheath and Greenwich District Electric Light.

And also the Certificate that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with: Grindleford, Baslow, and Bakewell Railway.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 1037

South Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway Bill [H.L.].—Petition for additional provision; of the South Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway Company; together with the proposed clause annexed thereto; read, and referred to the Examiners 1037

Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.], (Ramsbottom Urban District Council Order).—A witness ordered to attend the Select Committee 1037

Grindleford, Baslow, and Bakewell Railway Bill.—Examiner's Certificate of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Tuesday next 1037

Manchester Southern Tramways (Lancashire) Bill [H.L.]; Manchester Southern Tramways (Cheshire) Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Select Committee, that the Committee have consolidated the said Bills, with Amendments, under the Title of the Manchester Southern Tramways Bill [H.L.]; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 1037

Manchester Southern Tramways (Lancashire) Bill [H.L.]; and Manchester Southern Tramways (Cheshire) Bill [H.L.], now Manchester Southern Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1037

Bristol Corporation Bill [H.L.].—The King's consent signified; and Bill reported, with Amendments 1038

Commercial Gas Bill.—Reported, with Amendments 1038

Salford Corporation Bill [H.L.].—The King's consent signified; and Bill reported, with Amendments 1038

Scottish Central Electric Power Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª 1038

Cork Harbour Bill.—Read 2ª, and committed 1038

London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill; East Ham Improvement Bill; Highland and Invergarry and Fort Augustus Railway Companies Bill; Wellingborough and District Tramroads Bill. Read 2ª, and committed. The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 1038

Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Bill; Cheshire Lines Committee Bill; Newcastle-upon-Tyne Electric Supply Bill.—Read 2ª, and committed 1038

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Midland and Belfast and Northern Counties Railways Bill; Watford and Edgeware Railway Bill.—Read 2^{a}, and committed. The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 1038

Wood Green Urban District Council Bill.—Read 2^{a} 1038

Carmarthenshire Electric Power Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^{a}; Amendments made; Bill passed and sent to the Commons 1038

London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway Bill.—Standing Order No. 93 considered (according to Order), and dispensed with, with respect to a petition of Messrs. Frederick Boyd Brown and Charles Wells. Leave given to present the said Petition 1038

Knott End Railway (Extension of Time) Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to 1038

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill.—House in Committee (according to Order). Amendments made. Standing Committee negatived. Report of Amendments to be received on Thursday next ... 1039

Local Government Provisional Order (Housing of the Working Classes) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill.—Read 3^{a} (according to Order), and passed 1039

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill.—Read 2^{a} (according to Order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next 1039

Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]; Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to Order): Bills reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bills to be read 3^{a} on Thursday next 1039

Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to Order); Amendments made; Standing Committee negatived; Report of Amendments to be received on Thursday next 1039

Polling Districts (County Councils) Bill [H.L.] Polling Arrangements (Parliamentary Boroughs) Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^{a} (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 1039

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 10) Bill (No. 108); Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 12) Bill (No. 109); Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 14) Bill (No. 110); Local Government Provisional Order (No. 16) Bill (No. 111); Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) Bill (No. 112).—Brought from the Commons; read 1^{a}; to be printed; referred to the Examiners, and to be read 2^{a} on Thursday next.—(*The Lord Kenyon*) 1039

Caledonian Railway Order Confirmation Bill (No. 113); Edinburgh Corporation (Markets, Slaughter-houses, etc.) Order Confirmation Bill (No. 114); Grangemouth Water Order Confirmation Bill (No. 115); Lanarkshire Electricity and Refuse Destruction Order Confirmation Bill (No. 116).—Brought from the Commons; read 1^{a}; to be printed, and (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899), deemed to have been read 2^{a} (*The Lord Balfour*), and reported from the Committee ... 1039

PETITIONS.

Declaration of the Sovereign against Transubstantiation.—Petitions for abrogation of; of Roman Catholics residing in Croxdale; Shanklin and Sandown; and Brixton; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 1040

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

South Africa.—Minutes of Proceedings of the South African Customs Union Conference, held at Bloemfontein, March, 1903; Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 1040

Municipal Trading.—Ordered, That the evidence taken by the Joint Committee on Municipal Trading during the session of 1900, be referred to the Joint Committee on Municipal Trading of the present session 1040

NEW BILL.

Newcastle Chapter (Amendment) Bill [H.L.].—A Bill to make further provision for the foundation of a Dean and Chapter of Newcastle, and for other purposes connected therewith.—Was presented by the Lord Bishop of St. Albans; read 1ª, to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Tuesday next. (No. 117.) 1040

Musical Copyright Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Standing Committee with Amendments. The Report thereof to be received on Thursday next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 106.) 1040

Statute Law Revision (Scotland) Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Standing Committee without Amendment, and to be read 3ª on Thursday next ... 1041

Justices of the Peace Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Standing Committee without further Amendment. The Report of the Amendments made in Committee of the whole House to be received on Thursday next. 1041

Coal Mines (Certificates) Bill.—Reported from the Standing Committee with an Amendment. The Report thereof to be received on Thursday next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 107.) 1041

Rules of Order.

The Earl of Wemyss 1041
The Secretary for Scotland (*Lord Balfour of Burleigh*) 1041

British Interests in China.

The Earl of Mayo 1043
The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (*The Marquess of Lansdowne*) 1046

House adjourned at five minutes past Five o'clock to Thursday next, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, TUESDAY, 16th June, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Private Bills [Lords] (Standing Orders not Previously Inquired into Complied With).—Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz., Exeter Corporation Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time 1048

London and North-Western Railway Bill [LORDS].—Read a second time and committed 1049

St. Luke's Church and Parish Quoad Sacra, Edinburgh, Order Confirmation Bill [LORDS].—Considered; to be read the third time upon Friday 1049

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (East Ham, etc.) Bill [LORDS]; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill.—Read a second time and committed 1049

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP F.).—Ordered, That Robert Thomas Blackburn and James W. Drury do attend the Committee on Group F of Private Bills To-morrow, at Eleven of the Clock 1049

STANDING ORDERS.—Resolutions reported from the Select Committee:—

1. "That in the case of the Kips Patents Bill [Lords], the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

2. "That, in the case of the Alexandra Park and Palace, Petition for leave to deposit a Petition for a Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:—That the parties be permitted to deposit their Petition for a Bill."

3. "That, in the case of the Hove, Worthing, and District Tramways Bill [Lords], the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

Resolution agreed to 1049

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to, Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 2) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill; Market Drayton Gas Bill, without Amendment.

Amendments to, Wellington (Salop) Gas Bill [Lords] without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act for extending the operation of and amending the Union of Benefices Act, 1860, and for the disposal of unnecessary chapels of ease." [Union of Benefices Act (1860) Amendment Bill (Lords).]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Chatham and District Light Railways Company to construct tramways and tramroads and other works; and for other purposes." [Chatham and District Light Railways Bill (Lords).] 1050

Chatham and District Light Railways Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 1050

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PETITIONS.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.—Petitions against: from Brighton; and Wallasey; to lie upon the Table 1050

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.—Petition from York, for alteration of law; to lie upon the Table 1051

PUBLIC HOUSES (HOURS OF CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Paisley, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1051

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.—Petition from Bradford, in favour; to lie upon the Table... 1051

CHURCH DISCIPLINE Bill.—Petitions against: from Teddington; Wallasey; Brighton; Lewisham; Croydon; and Wolverhampton; to lie upon the Table 1051

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN BILL.—Petitions in favour: from Perth; and Auchterarder; to lie upon the Table 1051

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.—Petition from Perth, against; to lie upon the Table... 1051

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petition from Newmilnes, in favour; to lie upon the Table... 1051

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

SOUTH AFRICA.—Copy presented, of Minutes of Proceedings of the South African Customs Union Conference held at Bloemfontein, March, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1051

PROSECUTION OF OFFENCES ACTS, 1879 AND 1884.—Address for "Return showing the working of the Regulations made in 1886 for carrying out the Prosecution of Offences Acts, 1879 and 1884, with Statistics setting forth the number, cost, and results of the Proceedings instituted by the Director in accordance with those Regulations from the 1st day of January, 1902, to the 31st day of December, 1902 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 154, of Session 1902)."—(*Mr. Cochrane.*) 1051

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG CHILDREN ON TEA ESTATES IN CEYLON.—Question, Mr. Schwann (Manchester, N.); Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 1052

CEYLON TAXATION COMMITTEE REPORT.—Question, Mr. Schwann; Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 1052

SEPTIC TANKS—DANGER OF EXPLOSIONS.—Question, Sir John Rolleston (Leicester); Answer, Mr. Walter Long 1053

VIVISECTION RETURN—DATE OF PUBLICATION.—Question, Dr. Shipman (Northampton); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 1053

NAVAL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME.—Question, Mr. James Hope (Fife, W.); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 1053

SALE OF IRISH LAND—BONUSES.—Question, Mr. Charles Craig (Antrim, S.); Answer, Mr. Atkinson 1053

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GOVERNORSHIPS OF IRISH PRISONS.—Question, Mr. Charles Devlin (Galway); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1054

INQUIRY INTO INCREASE OF LUNACY IN IRELAND.—Question, Mr. Samuel Young (Cavan, W.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1054

IRISH POOR LAW MEDICAL OFFICERS.—Question, Dr. Thompson (Monaghan, N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1055

PRESERVATION OF BIG GAME IN AFRICA.—Question, Sir Harry Seton-Karr (St. Helens); Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 1056

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

BRITISH INVESTMENTS ABROAD.—Question, Mr. Herbert Samuel (Yorkshire, Cleveland); Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Ritchie, Croydon) 1057

IRISH POOR LAW ADMINISTRATION.—Question, Mr. Nannetti (Dublin, College Green); Answer, The Attorney-General for Ireland (Mr. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.) 1057

THE FISCAL POLICY OF THE EMPIRE.—Questions, Mr. Mansfield (Lincolnshire, Spalding), Mr. John Ellis (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe), and Mr. Edmund Robertson (Dundee); Answers, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 1058

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—Questions, Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis); Answers, Mr. A. J. Balfour... 1059

SELECTION.—Mr. WODEHOUSE reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had nominated the following five Members to serve on the Joint Committee of Lords and Commons on the Port of London Bill: Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Laurence Hardy, Sir Alexander Henderson, Mr. Mellor, and Mr. Russell Rea.

Report to lie upon the Table 1060

NEW BILL.

Shops (No. 2) Bill.—"To amend the law relating to shops," presented by Sir Charles Dilke; supported by Mr. John Burns, Mr. Flower, Mr. Lloyd-George, Mr. Kemp, Mr. M'Crae, Mr. Melville, Mr. Nannetti, Sir Barrington Simeon, and Mr. Tennant; to be read a second time upon Friday, and to be printed [Bill 244.] 1060

Irish Land Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:—

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 15, to leave out from the word 'advance' to the end of Sub-section (2), and insert the words 'provided that the purchase annuity payable under this Act will be, in the case of the purchase of a holding, subject to a judicial rent fixed or agreed to since the passing of the Act of 1896, not less than 15 per cent. below the existing rent, and in the case of the purchase of a holding subject to a judicial rent fixed before that date, or of a holding which is not subject to a judicial rent, but the tenancy in which is one to which, in the opinion of the Land Commission, the Land Purchase Acts apply, not less than 25 per cent. below the existing rent.' "—(*Mr. John Redmond.*)

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'or' in line 18, stand part of the clause."

Mr. Dillon (*Mayo, E.*) 1061
Colonel Saunderson (*Armagh, N.*) 1077
Sir Edward Grey (*Northumberland, Berwick*) 1081
The Chief Secretary for Ireland (*Mr. Wyndham, Dover*) 1084
Mr. T. W. Russell (*Tyrone, S.*) 1094
Mr. John Redmond (*Waterford*) 1094
Sir Robert Reid (*Dumfries Burghs*) 1097
Mr. Wood (*Down, E.*) 1099
Mr. Fletcher Moulton (*Cornwall, Launceston*) 1101
Mr. T. M. Healy (*Louth, N.*) 1104
Mr. John Morley (*Montrose Burghs*) 1109
Mr. T. P. O'Connor (*Liverpool, Scotland*)... 1110
Mr. T. W. Russell 1113
Mr. Wyndham 1115
Mr. John Redmond 1117
Mr. Blake (*Longford, S.*) 1118
Mr. Gordon (*Londonderry, S.*) 1122
Mr. Harrington (*Dublin, Harbour*) 1123

And, it being half-past Seven of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

Irish Land Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:—

Amendment proposed—

> "In page 1, line 15, to leave out from the word 'advance' to the end of Sub-section (2), and insert the words 'provided that the purchase annuity payable under this Act will be, in the case of the purchase of a holding, subject to a judicial rent fixed or agreed to since the passing of the Act of 1896, not less than 15 per cent. below the existing rent, and, in the case of the purchase of a holding subject to a judicial rent fixed before that date or of a holding which is not subject to a judicial rent but the tenancy in which is one to which in the opinion of the Land Commission the Land Purchase Acts apply, not less than 25 per cent. below the existing rent.' "—(*Mr. John Redmond.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'or,' in line 18, stand part of the Clause."

Mr. Harrington 1125
Mr. T. L. Corbett (Down, N.) 1128
Mr. Clancy (Dublin Co., N.) 1129
Mr. Samuel Young (Cavan, E.) 1132
Mr. Flynn (Cork, N.) 1132
Mr. Herbert Robertson (Hackney, S.) 1136
Mr. Kilbride (Kildare, S.)... 1137
Mr. Power (Waterford, E.) 1142
Mr. Swift Macneill, (Donegal, S.) 1143
Mr. Macveagh (Down S.) 1145

Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 217 ; Noes, 176. (Division List No. 118.)

Mr. T. W. Russell 1151

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 18, to leave out from the figures '1896,' to the word 'if,' in line 21."—(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

Mr. Wyndham 1154
Mr. T. M. Healy 1155
Mr. Dillon 1155

Question put, and negatived.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion made—That the Committee do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Committee report Progress ; to sit again To-morrow.

IRISH LAND [ADVANCES, ETC.].

Resolution reported.—"That, for carrying out the provisions of any Act of the present session to amend the law relating to the occupation and ownership of land in Ireland, it is expedient—

(a) To authorise the creation of capital stock for raising money required for the Irish Land Purchase Fund and the Land Purchase Aid Fund, and to authorise the National Debt Commissioners to borrow and lend money for the purposes aforesaid, and to charge on the Consolidated Fund the payment of the dividends on such stock so far as not paid out of the income of the Irish Land Purchase Fund, and to authorise the payment out of money to be provided by Parliament of sums sufficient to pay the dividends and Sinking Fund required for the Land Purchase Aid Fund.

(b) To authorise the payment out of money to be provided by Parliament of the salaries of the Estates Commissioners, the Public Trustee, and of officers, and persons employed by them, and of certain expenses of the Land Commission ; and

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(c) To authorise the payment out of the Consolidated Fund of superannuation allowances to certain Land Commissioners."

Resolution agreed to. 1156

Guinea Postal Orders Bill.—Read a second time, and committed for Tuesday next. 1156

Adjourned at four minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, 17TH JUNE, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Winchester Water and Gas Bill.—Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to 1157

Wirral Railway Bill [LORDS].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 1157

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill.—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.—To be read the third time To-morrow 1157

PETITIONS.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.—Petitions against; from Clevedon; Sidcup; and Birmingham (two); to lie upon the Table 1157

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petitions for alteration; from Hurlford; and Roberton; to lie upon the Table 1157

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.—Petitions against; from Oxford; and Durham; to lie upon the Table 1157

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

PROSECUTION OF OFFENCES ACTS, 1879 AND 1884.—Return presented, relative thereto [Address 16th June—*Mr. Cochrane*] to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 209.] 1157

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES). — Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2996 to 3000 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1157

EAST AFRICA (CONCESSIONS).—Address for "Return, showing the names of the firms or individuals to whom concessions have been granted in East Africa or Uganda; the exact nature and terms of those concessions; and the exact localities and areas of their operation."—(*Mr. Malcolm.*) 1158

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS.—Return ordered, "showing the imports and exports of the United Kingdom with foreign countries, self-governing colonies, India, and other British possessions separately, for the periods 1881–5, 1886–90, and for each year since."—(*Mr. Lambert.*) 1158

PUBLIC INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.—Return ordered, "of net public income and net public expenditure under certain specified heads, as represented by receipts into and issued out of the Exchequer from 1880–81 to 1902–3, inclusive (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 323, of Session 1902."—(*Sir Henry Fowler.*) 1158

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

UNAUTHORISED BARONETS.—Question, Sir John Dorington (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury): Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 1158

AREAS OF PARLIAMENTARY DIVISIONS.—Question, Mr. H. J. Wilson (Yorkshire, W.R., Holmfirth); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 1159

BOARD OF EDUCATION GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS. — Question, Mr. H. J. Wilson; Answer, Mr. Arthur Elliot 1159

BRITISH CEMETERY AT CORFU. — Question, Mr. Brotherton (Winkfield); Answer, Lord Cranborne 1159

TIME LIMIT OF TELEPHONE TRUNK CALLS.—Question, Mr. Brotherton; Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 1160

UNDERGROUND TELEGRAPH CABLE TO WOLSEFIELD.—Question, Mr. Brotherton; Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 1160

SCHOOLS UNDER SECTION 1—EDUCATION MINUTE OF 28TH MAY.—Question, Mr. Chas. Douglas (Lanarkshire, N.W.); Answer, Mr. A. Graham Murray 1161

REGISTRY OF DEEDS OFFICE, DUBLIN—CHIEF CLERKSHIP.—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy (Louth, N.); Answer, Mr. Elliot 1161

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE—PROMOTION OF TEMPORARY CLERK TO A STAFF APPOINTMENT.—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, Mr. Wyndham ... 1161

IRISH POOR LAW INQUIRY—PRINTING OF EVIDENCE.— Question, Mr. Nannetti (Dublin, College Green); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1162

EVENING SCHOOLS IN IRELAND—DELAY IN PAYMENT OF TEACHERS' SALARIES. —Question, Mr. Thomas O'Donnell (Kerry, W.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1162

SOUTH AFRICAN WAR MEDALS.—Question, Sir John Leng (Dundee); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 1163

ARMY—PROMOTION OF COLONELS.—Question, Major Rasch (Essex, Chelmsford); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 1163

HOME SERVICE FOR 2ND BATTALION, ROYAL DUBLIN FUSILIERS.—Question, Mr. Charles Craig (Antrim, S.); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 1164

WOMEN ON EDUCATION COMMITTEES.—Question, Mr. J. H. Lewis (Flint Boroughs); Answer, Sir William Anson 1164

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

CONDEMNED ARMY RATIONS.—Questions, Mr. Pirie (Aberdeen, N.), Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.), Mr. Keir Hardie (Merthyr Tydvil) and Mr. Eugene Wason (Clackmannan and Kinross); Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford) 1165

ENLISTMENT OF RECRUITS.—AGE REGULATIONS.—Questions, Mr. Pirie; Answers, Mr. Brodrick 1166

ARMY VETERINARY DEPARTMENT.—Question, Captain Norton (Newington, W.); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 1167

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GUNNERY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN FLEET.—Questions, Mr. Gibson Bowles; Answers, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Arnold-Forster, Belfast, W.) 1167

EFFICIENCY IN NAVAL GUNNERY.—Question, Mr. Gibson Bowles; Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 1169

NAVAL CADETS.—Questions, Mr. Gibson Bowles and Mr. Swift MacNeill (Donegal, S.); Answers, Mr. Arnold Forster 1170

NAVAL MEDICAL AND ACCOUNTANT OFFICERS.—Question, Mr. O'Doherty (Donegal, N.); Answer, Mr. Arnold Forster... 1171

GREAT BRITAIN AND SERVIA.—Questions, Mr. William Redmond, Mr. Gibson Bowles, and Mr. Malcolm (Suffolk, Stowmarket); Answers, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 1171

INTERFERENCE WITH BRITISH FISHERMEN ON THE DUTCH COASTS.—Question, Mr. Doughty (Gt. Grimsby); Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Lord Cranborne, Rochester)... 1172

MINISTRY OF COMMERCE.—Question, Mr. Hoult (Cheshire, Wirrall); Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Ritchie, Croydon) 1173

THE FISCAL INQUIRY.—Question, Mr. Soares (Devonshire, Barnstaple); Answer, Mr. Ritchie 1173

BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS—REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION.—Question, Mr. Field (Dublin, St. Patrick); Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Walter Long, Bristol S.) 1174

LIGHT DUES REDUCTIONS.—Question, Mr. Charles M'Arthur (Liverpool, Exchange); Answer, The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade (Mr. Bonar Law, Glasgow, Blackfriars) 1174

TRADE STATISTICS.—Question, Mr. Nussey (Pontefract); Answer, Mr. Bonar Law 1174

DUTIES ON BRITISH GOODS ABROAD.—Questions, Mr. Lambert (Devonshire, South Molton), Mr. Gibson Bowles, Mr. Herbert Samuel (Yorkshire, Cleveland) and Mr. Humphreys-Owen (Montgomeryshire) 1175

CASTLECOMER AND KILKENNY TRAMWAY.—Question, Mr. O'Mara (Kilkenny, S.); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) ... 1176

LONDONDERRY AND DONEGAL UNION BOUNDARIES.—Question, Mr. O'Doherty; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1176

VAGRANCY IN IRELAND.—Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde (Wexford, N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1177

THE LAND BILL AND LIFE ANNUITANTS.—Question, Mr. Edward Mitchell (Fermanagh, N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1177

SOUTH ANTRIM REGISTER OF VOTERS.—Question, Mr. Wood (Down, E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1178

PLANTER TENANTS AND DERELICT FARMS.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell (Longford, N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1178

CORGLASS AND COMAKELLY TOWNLAND TENANTS.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1179

POTATO SPRAYING IN COUNTY KERRY.—Questions, Mr. Thomas O'Donnell (Kerry, W.) and Mr. J. P. Farrell; Answers, Mr. Wyndham 1179

IRISH PUBLIC DEPARTMENT AUDITS.—Question, Mr. Field; Answer, The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Arthur Elliot, Durham) ... 1180

AUDIT OF IRISH PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.—Question, Mr. Field; Answer, Mr. Elliot 1180

IRISH LIGHTS.—Question, Mr. Mooney (Dublin Co., S.); Answer, Mr. Bonar Law 1180

PREFERENTIAL TARIFFS—MR. SEDDON'S SPEECH IN NEW ZEALAND.—Question, Mr. Labouchere (Northampton); Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. J. Chamberlain, Birmingham, W.) 1181

THE GOVERNMENT FISCAL INQUIRY.—Questions, Mr. Labouchere, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs) Mr. Lloyd George (Carnarvon Boroughs), and Sir Charles Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean); Answers, Mr. A. J. Balfour 1182

CANADA AND THE GERMAN TARIFF.—Question, Mr. Sydney Buxton (Tower Hamlets, Poplar); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 1184

NEW SOUTH WALES AND THE GOVERNMENT DECLARATIONS.—Questions, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman; Answers, Mr. A. J. Balfour 1185

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy (Louth, N.) and Mr. Delany, (Queen's County, Ossory); Answers, Mr. Wyndham 1186

NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT AND PREFERENTIAL TARIFFS—MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.—SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs) rose in his place and asked leave to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, viz., "the misunderstanding created in the mind of the Government of the colony of New South Wales by the speeches of the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary, and the necessity of making it clear to the Government of New South Wales that these speeches are isolated expressions of opinion to which the Cabinet is in no way committed;" and the pleasure of the House having been signified,

The Motion stood over, under Standing Order No. 10, until the Evening Sitting this day 1186

SELECTION.—Mr. HALSEY reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following Member from the Joint Committee of Lords and Commons on the Port of London Bill: Sir Alexander Henderson; and had appointed in substitution: Sir Charles Renshaw.
Report to lie upon the Table 1187

Union of Benefices Act (1860) Amendment Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 247.] 1187

Post Office Sites Bill.—Ordered, That Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Sir Thomas Firbank, and Mr. Rose be Members of the Select Committee on the Post Office Sites Bill.—(*Sir Alexander Acland-Hood.*) 1187

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Public Offices (Dublin) Bill.—Ordered, That Mr. Elliot, Mr. Boland, and Mr. Charles Allen be Members of the Select Committee on the Public Offices (Dublin) Bill.—(*Sir Alexander Acland-Hood.*) 1187

Irish Land Bill.

Considered in Committee.

[In the Committee.]

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:—

Mr. J. B. Farrell (*Longford, N.*) 1187

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, lines 21 and 22, to leave out the words 'and perpetual rent-charge.'"—(*Mr. J. B. Farrell.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. William O'Brien (*Cork*) 1190
The Chief Secretary for Ireland (*Mr. Wyndham, Dover*) 1191
Mr. T. W. Russell (*Tyrone, S.*) 1192
Mr. John Redmond (*Waterford*) 1195
Mr. Coghill (*Stoke-upon-Trent*) 1196

Question put, and negatived.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. John Redmond 1197

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 23, to leave out the word 'ten' and insert the word 'fifteen.'"—(*Mr. John Redmond.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'ten' stand part of the Clause."

Sir John Colomb (*Great Yarmouth*) 1198
Mr. Dillon (*Mayo, E.*) 1200
Mr. Butcher (*York*) 1202
Mr. T. M. Healy (*Louth, N.*) 1203
Colonel Saunderson (*Armagh, N.*) 1204
Mr. Harrington (*Dublin, Harbour*) 1205
Mr. T. W. Russell 1205
Mr. Emmott (*Oldham*) 1205
Mr. Wyndham 1207
Mr. Hemphill (*Tyrone, N.*) 1209
Mr. Ashton (*Bedfordshire, Luton*) 1209
Mr. Tomkinson (*Cheshire, Crewe*) 1210
Mr. Flynn (*Cork Co., N.*) 1211
Mr. O'Doherty (*Donegal, N.*) 1211
Mr. Duffy (*Galway, S.*) 1214
Mr. Murphy (*Kerry, E.*) 1215
Mr. O'Dowd (*Sligo, S.*) 1215
Mr. William Redmond (*Clare, E.*) 1216

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Question put.

Committee divided :—Ayes, 217 ; Noes, 174. (Division List No. 119.)

Mr. John Redmond... 1221

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 24, to leave out the word 'thirty' and insert the word 'forty.'"—(*Mr. John Redmond.*)

Question proposed, "That the word "thirty" stand part of the Clause."

Mr. Wyndham 1221
Mr. T. M. Healy 1223
Mr. Dillon... 1225
The Attorney-General for Ireland (*Mr. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.*) ... 1228
Mr. T. P. O'Connor (*Liverpool, Scotland*)... 1231
Mr. T. W. Russell 1233
Mr. T. M. Healy 1234

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 214 ; Noes, 156. (Division List No. 120.)

And, it being half-past Seven of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress ; to sit again this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

NEW SOUTH WALES AND PREFERENTIAL TARIFFS—MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT (UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 10.)

Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (*Stirling Burghs*) 1241

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.*)

The First Lord of the Treasury (*Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.*) ... 1249
Sir Charles Dilke (*Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean*) 1254
Mr. Robson (*South Shields*) 1256
Lord Hugh Cecil (*Greenwich*) 1262
Sir Edward Grey (*Northumberland, Berwick*) 1264
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (*Mr. J. Chamberlain, Birmingham, W.*) 1267
Mr. Lloyd-George (*Carnarvon Boroughs*) 1272

Question put.

House divided :—Ayes, 132 ; Noes, 252. Division List, No. 121.)

Irish Land Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Clause 1 :—

Mr. Duke (*Plymouth*) 1277

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Amendment proposed—

"In Page 1, line 23, after the word 'ten' to insert the words 'per cent. below the existing rent, but will be more than thirty per cent. below the existing rent, and the Land Commission are satisfied upon inquiry that the purchase price does not unduly affect the interests of the person entitled to the first estate in tail in remainder expectant on the estate of the vendor at the time of the proposed sale or any other remainderman or incumbrancer.'"—(*Mr. Duke.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Wyndham 1279

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. John Redmond... 1279

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 28, to leave out the word 'twenty,' and insert the word 'twenty-five.'" (*Mr. John Redmond.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'twenty' stand part of the clause."

Mr. Wyndham 1279
Mr. Dillon 1279
Mr. Wyndham 1281
Mr. Harrington 1282
Mr. T. W. Russell... 1282
Mr. John Redmond 1283
Mr. Wyndham 1283

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress; and ask leave to sit again." (*Mr. John Redmond.*) Put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

Military Lands Bill.—Considered in Committee, and reported; as amended, to be considered upon Thursday, 25th June 1284

THE CANADIAN PACIFIC MAIL CONTRACT.

The Postmaster-General (*Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.*) ... 1284
Mr. Caldwell (*Lanarkshire, Mid*) 1284

POST OFFICE (HALIFAX (OR QUEBEC) AND HONG KONG MAIL CONTRACT).—Resolved, That the Contract with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, dated the 12th day of October, 1901, for the conveyance of His Majesty's mails, troops, and stores between Halifax (or Quebec) and Hong Kong, for the period from the 7th day of April, 1901, to the 6th day of April, 1906, printed in Parliamentary Paper, No. 21, of Session 1902, be approved.—(*Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) 1284

Poor Prisoners Defence Bill.—Ordered, That Mr. Arkwright and Mr. Nussey be added to the Select Committee on the Poor Prisoners Defence Bill.—(*Sir Alexander Acland-Hood.*) 1284

HOUSE OF COMMONS (VENTILATION).—Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the ventilation of the House.

Mr. Dillon, Dr. Farquharson, Sir Michael Foster, Mr. Goddard, Sir J. Batty Tuke, Mr. A. H. Smith, and Mr. Victor Cavendish were accordingly nominated members of the Committee.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Sir Alexander Acland-Hood.*)... 1284

Adjourned at five minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS, THURSDAY, JUNE 18TH, 1903.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with; Scottish Ontario and Manitoba Land Company [H.L.]; Dover Corporation; Merthyr Tydfil Urban District Council.

Also the Certificates that no Standing Orders are applicable to the following Bills; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 12); Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 14); Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law).

Also the Certificate that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have not been complied with: Wigan Corporation Tramways.

Also the Certificates that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 10); Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 16).

And also the Certificate that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with; South Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway [H.L.]—(Petition for additional Provision).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 1285

Plymouth Corporation Bill.—Report from His Majesty's Attorney-General received, and ordered to lie on the Table 1285

New Hunstanton Improvement Bill.—The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn; The orders made on the 26th of May last and the 15th instant discharged, and Bill committed for Tuesday next 1285

Wood Green Urban District Council Bill.—Committed; The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 1285

Gas Light and Coke Company Bill.—Reported, with an Amendment ... 1286

Ipswich Gas Bill; Bournemouth Gas and Water Bill [H.L.]; Great Eastern Railway Bill; Nelson Corporation Bill.—Reported, with Amendments ... 1286

South Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway Bill [H.L.] (Petition for additional provision); Wigan Corporation Tramways Bill.—Examiner's Certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Tuesday next 1286

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West Cumberland Electric Tramways Bill.—Read 2^a, and committed ... 1286

Seaforth and Sefton Junction Railway Bill.—Read 2^a, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 1286

Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland Bill.—Read 2^a, and committed 1286

Middlesbrough Corporation Bill.—Read 2^a, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 1286

Lanarkshire and Dumbartonshire Railway Bill; South Yorkshire Joint Railways Bill.—Read 2^a, and committed 1286

Wolverhampton and Cannock Chase Railway (Extension of Time) Bill.—Read 2^a, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 1286

Great Southern and Western Railway Bill.—Read 2^a, and committed ... 1286

Mullingar, Kells, and Drogheda Railway Bill.—Read 2^a, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 1286

Plymouth Corporation Bill.—Read 2^a, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 1286

Woolwich Borough **Council** Bill; Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway (Various Powers) Bill.—Read 2^a, and committed 1286

Great Western Railway Bill.—Read 2^a and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 1287

Hainault Forest Bill.—Read 2^a, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 1287

London County Council (Money) Bill.—Read 2^a, and committed 1287

Neath, Pontardawe, and Brynamen Railway Bill.—Read 2^a, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 1287

North-Eastern Railway Bill.—Read 2^a, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 1287

Merthyr Tydvil Urban District Council Bill.—Read 2^a 1287

Blackheath and Greenwich District Electric Light Bill.—Read 2^a, and committed 1287

Scottish Ontario and Manitoba Land Company Bill [H.L.]; Dover Corporation Bill.—Read 2^a. 1287

Derby Gas Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons ... 1287

Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]; Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 1287

Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Amendments reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3^a To-morrow... 1287

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Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 10) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 12) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 14) Bill; Local Government Provisional Order (No. 16) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) Bill.—Read 2ª (according to Order) 1287

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill.—Amendments reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next 1287

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill.—House in Committee (according to Order): Bill reported without Amendment: Standing Committee negatived, and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow... 1287

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 11) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (Gas) Bill.—Read 2ª (according to Order) and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next ... 1288

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 8) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (Housing of the Working Classes) Bill.—Read 2ª (according to Order) and Committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next 1288

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE REPORTS—ANNUAL SERIES.—

No. 2996. Brazil (Porto-Alegre).
No. 2997. Russia (Odessa).
No. 2998. Germany (Hamburg).
No. 2999. China (Newchwang).
No. 3000. Japan (South Formosa). 1288

ALLOWANCES TO WITNESSES IN CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS.—Report of the Departmental Committee appointed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department to inquire into the allowances to prosecutors and witnesses in criminal prosecutions; with evidence and appendices.
Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 1288

INDIA (LOANS RAISED IN INDIA).—Return of all loans raised in India chargeable on the revenues of India outstanding at the commencement of the half year ended the 31st March, 1903, with the rates of interest and total amount payable thereon, etc. 1288

SUPERANNUATION.—Treasury Minute, dated the 12th June, 1903, declaring that Frank Parham, Royal Laboratory Department, War Office, was appointed without a Civil Service certificate, through inadvertence on the part of the head of his department.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 1289

PORT OF LONDON BILL.—Leave given to the Joint Committee to hear parties interested by themselves, their counsel, agents, and witnesses, so far as the Committee think fit. The evidence taken before the Joint Committee from time to time to be printed, but no copies to be delivered except to members of the Committee, and to such other persons as the Committee shall think fit, until further order. (No. 118.) 1289

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NEW BILL.

Royal Declaration Bill [H.L.]—A Bill to abolish the declaration required to be made by the Sovereign on his Accession was presented by the Earl Grey; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Thursday next. (No. 119.) 1289

Naval Works Provisional Order Bill.—Read 2ª (according to Order), and committed to a Committee of the whole House To-morrow... 1289

Musical Copyright Bill [H.L.].—Amendments reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow 1289

Statute Law Revision (Scotland) Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 1289

Justices of the Peace Bill [H.L.].—Amendments reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow 1289

Coal Mines (Certificates) Bill.—Amendment reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow 1289

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: THURSDAY, 18TH JUNE, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Midland Railway Bill.—Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to 1290

South Shields Corporation Bill.—As amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time 1290

STANDING ORDERS.

Ordered, That so much of Standing Order 91 as fixes five as the quorum of the Select Committee on Standing Orders be read and suspended.

Ordered, That, for the remainder of the session, three be the quorum of the Committee.—(*Mr. Halsey.*) 1290

ALEXANDRA PARK AND PALACE [PETITION FOR BILL.]—Ordered, That Standing Order 70 be suspended, and that the Examiners have leave to sit and proceed To-morrow.—(*Mr. Caldwell.*) 1290

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill.—Read the third time and passed 1290

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS.—The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means ... 1290

Hove, Worthing, and District Tramways Bill [LORDS]. — Report [16th June] from the Select Committee on Standing Orders read.

Bill to be read a second time.—(*Mr. Caldwell.*) 1290

Military Lands Provisional Orders Bill.—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow 1290

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Local Government Provisional Order (No. 18) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.
Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow 1291

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.
Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow 1291

Hamilton Burgh Provisional Order Bill.—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.
Bill to be read the third time To-morrow 1291

Broughty Ferry Gas Provisional Order Bill.—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.
Bill to be read the third time To-morrow 1291

Ulster and Connaught Light Railways Bill; Belfast Water Bill [Lords]; Shepshed Urban District Gas Bill [Lords]; Scunthorpe Urban District Water Bill [Lords]; Southampton Harbour Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1291

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Order relating to county of Dublin not confirmed. Remaining Orders confirmed]. [Title amended]; Report to lie upon the Table.
Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow 1291

Croydon and District Electric Tramways Bill; Harrow Road and Paddington Tramways Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1291

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP NO. 10).—Sir EDWARD STRACHEY reported from the Committee on Group No. 10 of Railway Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Monday next, at half past Eleven of the clock.
Report to lie upon the Table 1291

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to—Local Government Provisional Order (Housing of the Working Classes) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill, without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to make further provision with respect to the arrangement of Polling Districts for the election of County Councillors." [Polling Districts (County Councils) Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, Intituled, "An Act to Amend the Law relating to the Arrangement of Polling Districts in Parliamentary Boroughs. [Polling Arrangements (Parliamentary Boroughs) (Lords).]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for incorporating and conferring powers on the Carmarthenshire Electric Power Company" [Carmarthenshire Electric Power Bill (Lords).] 1292

Carmarthenshire Electric Power Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 1292

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PETITIONS.

British and Irish Meat Protection Bill.—Petition from Battersea, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1292

Burgh Police (Scotland) Bill.—Petition from Perth, for alteration; to lie upon the Table 1292

Church Discipline Bill.—Petitions against: from Tottenham; London (two); Manchester; Holborn; Balham; Reading; and Kingston-on-Thames; to lie upon the Table 1292

Coal Mines Regulation Bill.—Petition from Weig Fawr, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1292

Cottage Homes Bill.—Petition from Battersea, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1292

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Irish Lights Board—Salaries of Staff.—Question, Colonel McCalmont (Antrim, E.); Answer, Mr. Bonar Law 1295

Transference of Ancient Wills from Somerset House to the Record Office.—Question, Mr. Vicary Gibbs (Hertfordshire, St. Albans); Answer, Mr. Arthur Elliot 1295

Annual Leave of Customs Assistant Clerks.—Question, Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton); Answer, Mr. Arthur Elliot 1295

Election of Income Tax Commissioners.—Question, Mr. J. H. Lewis (Flint Boroughs); Answer, Mr. Arthur Elliot 1296

Telegraph Clerks and Postal Duties.—Question, Mr. Bell (Derby); Answer (Mr. Austen Chamberlain) 1297

Salaries of Telegraph Clerks in the Central Telegraph Office, London.—Question, Mr. Claude Hay; Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 1297

Candidates for Posts as Male Learners in the Post Office.—Question, Mr. Claude Hay; Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 1298

Ilford Sorting Office—Sanitary Conditions.—Question, Mr. Lewis Sinclair (Essex, Romford); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 1298

Average Cost Per Annum of Soldiers in India.—Question, Mr. Charles Hobhouse (Bristol, E.); Answer, Lord George Hamilton 1298

Corn Tax—Fraudulent Evasions.—Question, Mr. D. A. Thomas (Merthyr Tydvil); Answer, Mr. Ritchie 1299

Corn Tax—Rebates.—Question, Mr. Cawley (Lancashire, Prestwich); Answer, Mr. Ritchie 1299

Expenditure of Agricultural and Technical Instruction Rate in County Leitrim.—Question, Colonel McCalmont; Answer, Mr. Wyndham ... 1299

Construction of a Bridge at Coolavin, County Sligo.—Question, Mr. O'Dowd (Sligo, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1300

DISTURBANCE AT JOHNSTOWN, WATERFORD. Question, Mr. Sloan (Belfast, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1301

ARMY OFFICERS—PROFICIENCY IN JAPANESE.—Question, Mr. Charles Hobhouse; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 1301

SOMALILAND OPERATIONS.—Question, Mr. Fuller (Wiltshire, Westbury); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 1301

CO-OPERATIVE UNION—FREE ADVERTISEMENT IN ARMY REGULATIONS.—Questions, Mr. Charles Wilson (Hull, W.) and Mr. Marshall Hall (Lancashire, Southport); Answers, Mr. Brodrick 1302

NATURALISATION OF ALIENS IN THE TRANSVAAL COLONY.—Question, Mr. Keir Hardie (Merthyr Tydvil); Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 1302

PROPERTY IN THE SWAZILAND PROTECTORATE.—Question, Sir Cuthbert Quilter (Suffolk, Sudbury); Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 1302

BRITISH TRADE WITH THE COLONIES.—Questions, Mr. D. A. Thomas; Answers, Mr. J. Chamberlain 1303

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

SOMALILAND.—Questions, Mr. Charles Hobhouse (Bristol, E.), Captain Norton (Newington, W.), Mr. Lambert (Devonshire, South Molton), and Mr. Labouchere (Northampton); Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford) 1304

WOOLWICH ARSENAL DISASTER.—Questions, Mr. Crooks (Woolwich) and Captain Norton; Answers, Mr. Brodrick 1306

1ST BATTALION ROYAL IRISH RIFLES—Questions, Mr. Sloan (Belfast); Answers, Mr. Brodrick 1307

THE DYNAMITE DUTY IN SOUTH AFRICA.—Questions, Mr. Markham (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield) and Mr. Swift MacNeill (Donegal, S.); Answers, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. J. Chamberlain, Birmingham, W.) 1308

NATIVE LABOUR RECRUITING FOR THE TRANSVAAL IN CENTRAL AFRICA.—Questions, Sir Mark Stewart (Kirkcudbrightshire), Sir John Gorst (Cambridge University) and Mr. Labouchere; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Lord Cranborne, Rochester) 1309

THE KISCHINEFF OUTRAGES.—Question, Mr. Stuart Samuel (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel); Answer, Lord Cranborne 1310

PREFERENTIAL RAILWAY RATES FOR FOREIGN IMPORTERS.—Question, Mr. Field (Dublin, St. Patrick); Answer, The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade (Mr. Bonar Law, Glasgow, Blackfriars) 1311

FREE RAILWAY PASSES FOR M.P'S.—Questions, Mr. Field; Answers, Mr. Bonar Law 1312

FOOD AND RAW MATERIAL PRODUCED WITHIN THE UNITED KINGDOM.—Questions, Mr. Remnant (Finsbury, Holborn), Mr. Flavin (Kerry, N.) and Mr. Leamy (Kildare, N.); Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) 1313

COUNTY SLIGO TELEGRAPHS.—Question, Mr. O'Dowd (Sligo, S.); Answer, The Postmaster-General (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.) ... 1314

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Irish Railway Rates.—Question, Mr. Field; Answer, Mr. Bonar Law ... 1314

Irish Railway Rates—Judge Adam's Views—Question, Mr. Edward Mitchell (Fermanagh, N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1314

Londonderry Electric Lighting.—Question, Mr. O'Doherty (Donegal, N.); Answer, The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Arthur Elliot, Durham) 1315

Mr. P. A. M'Hugh, M.P.—Questions, Mr. Leamy, Mr. Delany (Queen's County, Ossory), and Mr. Pirie (Aberdeen, N.); Answers, The Attorney-General for Ireland (Mr. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.) 1316

Arms (Ireland) Act.—Question, Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1316

Cork Model Schools.—Question, Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien (Cork); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1317

Training of Irish School Teachers.—Question, Mr. Flynn; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1317

Cork Technical Committee and the Model Schools.—Questions, Mr. Flynn, Mr. John Redmond (Waterford), Captain Donelan (Cork Co., E.) and Mr. Sloan; Answers, Mr. Wyndham 1319

Letterkenny Railway.—Question, Mr. McFadden (Donegal, E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1319

Letterkenny Hiring Fair—Railway Breakdown.—Question, Mr. McFadden; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1319

Irish Salmon and Trout Fisheries.—Question, Mr. Edward Mitchell (Fermanagh, N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1322

Irish Poor Law Officers' Superannuation.—Question, Mr. Joyce (Limerick, W.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1322

The Fiscal Inquiry.—Questions, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis), and Mr. Bryce (Aberdeen, S.); Answers, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 1322

Shops (Early Closing) Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 248.] ... 1324

NEW BILL.

Day Industrial Schools (Ireland) Bill.—"To provide for the Establishment of Day Industrial Schools in Ireland," presented by Mr. Harrington; supported by Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Patrick O'Brien, and Mr. Field; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 1st July, and to be printed. [Bill 249.] 1324

Aged Pensioners Bill.—Ordered, That the Select Committee on the Aged Pensioners Bill be nominated of Sir Alexander Hargreaves Brown, Mr. Channing, Mr. Crean, Mr. Flower, Mr. Goulding, Mr. John Hutton, Mr. Lloyd-George, Mr. Grant Lawson, Mr. O'Shee, Mr. Pemberton, Colonel Pilkington, Sir Robert Reid, Mr. Remnant, Mr. Shackleton, and Mr. Skewes-Cox.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, that Five be the quorum.—(*Sir Alexander Acland-Hood.*) ... 1325

SUPPLY [13TH ALLOTTED DAY.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903-4 - CLASS IV.—Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £808,828, be granted to His Majesty to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for Public Education in Scotland, and for Science and Art in Scotland, including a Grant in Aid."

The Lord Advocate (Mr. A. Graham Murray, Buteshire) 1325
Mr. Thomas Shaw (Hawick Burghs) 1336
Mr. Shaw-Stewart (Renfrewshire, E.) 1345
Mr. Douglas (Lanarkshire, N.W.)... 1347
Sir John Gorst (Cambridge University) 1350
Mr. Bryce (Aberdeen, S.) 1356
Sir Charles Renshaw (Renfrewshire) 1361
Dr. Farquharson (Aberdeenshire, W.) 1363
Sir Mark Stewart (Kirkcudbrightshire) 1366
Mr. Black (Banffshire) 1368
Sir. J. Stirling Maxwell (Glasgow College) 1370
Mr. Munro Ferguson (Leith Burghs) 1370
Major Seely (Isle of Wight) 1373
Mr. Crombie (Kincardineshire) 1374
Mr. Hunter Craig (Lanarkshire, Govan) 1376
Mr. John Dewar (Inverness-shire)... 1378

And, it being half-past Seven of the Clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee Report Progress ; to sit again this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

Baker Street and Waterloo Railway (Transfer) Bill (BY ORDER).—[THIRD READING.]—Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made and Question proposed—"That the Bill be now read the third time."

Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton) 1378

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'be' to the end of the Question, and add the words 'recommitted to the former Committee.'"—(*Mr. Claude Hay.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. Jeffreys (Hants, N.) 1380

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 69 ; Noes 18. (Division List No. 122.)

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Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

SUPPLY [13TH ALLOTTED DAY.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903—4.—CLASS IV.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £808,828, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for Public Education in Scotland, and for Science and Art in Scotland, including a Grant-in-Aid."

Mr. John Dewar 1381
Mr. Brigg (*Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley*) 1382
Mr. Harmsworth (*Caithness-shire*)... 1382
Mr. Buchanan (*Perthshire, E*) 1383
Mr. Caldwell (*Lanarkshire, Mid*) 1385
Col. Denny (*Kilmarnock Burghs*) 1392
Mr. A. Graham Murray 1394
Mr. Crombie 1401

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum not exceeding £808,728, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Crombie.*)

Mr. Munro Ferguson 1402
Mr. John Dewar 1402

MR. CALDWELL rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but the Chairman withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question. Debate resumed.

And, it being midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

Marine Store Dealers (Ireland) Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2:—

Mr. MacVeagh (*Down, S.*)... 1403

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 14, after the word 'article' to insert the words, 'Provided that where articles of the same kind, value, and description are on any particular occasion bought or sold in a lot or parcel it will be sufficient to describe such lot or parcel without describing each of the several articles comprising same.'"—(*Mr. MacVeagh.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Caldwell (*Lanarkshire, Mid*) 1403

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."

Mr. Nannetti (*Dublin, College Green*) 1404
Mr. Caldwell 1404

Question put, and agreed to.

Committee report progress, to sit again upon Monday next.

Adjourned at eight minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: FRIDAY, 19TH JUNE, 1903.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with: Alexandra Park and Palace.

The same was ordered to lie on the Table 1405

Great Northern Railway Bill. The Lord Chancellor informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn: The orders made on the 14th of May and Monday last discharged, and Bill committed 1405

Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee with Amendments, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next. 1405

Mid Yorkshire Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1405

Manchester Southern Tramways Bill [H.L.]—Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons 1405

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill (No. 120).—Broughty Ferry Gas Provisional Order Bill (No. 121); Hamilton Burgh Provisional Order Bill (No. 122); Military Lands Provisional Orders Bill (No. 123); Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners 1405

Baker Street and Waterloo Railway (Transfer) Bill.—Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners 1405

St. Luke's Church and Parish Quoad Sacra Edinburgh Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to 1405

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Winchester Water and Gas Bill.—Midland Railway Bill; Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to. 1405

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill.—Order of yesterday for the Commitment of the Bill to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next discharged, and Bill committed: The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 1406

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill.—Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed 1406

Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 1406

Naval Work Provisional Order Bill.—Committee of the Whole House (which stands appointed for this day), put off to Monday next 1406

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

AFRICA NO. 6. (1903.)—Report by His Majesty's Commissioner on the East Africa Protectorate 1406

WELLINGTON COLLEGE.—Report of the Governors, for the year ended the 31st December, 1902; with accounts 1406

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.

Orders made by the Light Railway Commissioners and modified and confirmed by the Board of Trade.

Authorising the construction of light railways between Stockton Heath and Northwich, and elsewhere in the County of Chester.

Authorising the construction of light railways in the County Borough of Warrington and in the parishes of Stockton Heath and Latchford Without, in the County of Chester.

Authorising the construction of light railways in the County of Kent, in the County Borough of Canterbury, and in the rural districts of Bridge and of Blean, and in the urban district of Herne Bay.

Authorising the County Council of Middlesex to take lands for widening roads on which light railways will be laid in the parishes of Edgware, Finchley, Friern Barnet, Hendon, Kingsbury, Little Stanmore, Southgate, Tottenham, Willesden, and Wood Green, in the County of Middlesex.

Authorising the compulsory purchase of lands for the purposes of the Cole and Trawden Light Railways Order, 1901, and for other purposes.

Presented [by Command], and ordered to lie on the Table 1406

Bishoprics of Southwark and Birmingham Bill [H.L.].—[SECOND READING.]—Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

Lord Belper 1407
Earl Spencer 1407

Second Reading postponed accordingly until Monday next.

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PREFERENTIAL TARIFFS—GERMANY AND CANADA.

The Earl of Camperdown 1407

Moved, That an humble address be presented to His Majesty for correspondence relating to the statement of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, made on 15th June, that "it has been intimated by the German Government that if other British Colonies follow the example of Canada and give a preference to British imports, Great Britain probably will not be allowed to continue in receipt of the most-favoured-nation terms."—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (*The Marquess of Lansdowne*) 1412

Motion, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

THE SERVIAN MASSACRE.

Lord Newton 1414
The Marquess of Lansdowne 1416
Earl Spencer 1417
The Duke of Rutland 1418

Musical Copyright Bill [H.L.].—[THIRD READING.]

Moved, That the Bill be now read 3^a.—(*The Earl of Lytton.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

The Earl of Lytton 1418

Amendment moved—

"After Clause 4, to insert as a new Clause, 'If any person shall sell or offer for sale, or carry for the purpose of sale, in or through any street or public place, any pirated copy of any musical work, such person may be apprehended by any constable without warrant, if the true name and address of such person are not known to, and cannot then reasonably be ascertained by, the constable, and on the request in writing of the apparent owner of the copyright in such work, or of his agent thereto authorised in writing, and at the risk of such owner, and shall be taken as soon as reasonably may be before a Court of summary jurisdiction to be dealt with according to law.'"—(*The Earl of Lytton.*)

Lord Belper 1419

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

The Earl of Lytton 1419

Amendment moved—

Clause 6, to leave out Sub-sections 3 and 4, and to insert as a new Sub-section: 'This Act and the Musical (Summary Proceedings) Copyright Act, 1902, shall extend to the Isle of Man (and all penalties recoverable and all acts authorised to be done by, or in any Court of summary jurisdiction in the island, may be recovered or done before or by a high bailiff, or two justices of the peace).'"—(*The Earl of Lytton*).

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Moved, That the Bill do pass.—(*The Earl of Lytton*).

On Question, Motion agreed to, and Bill sent to the Commons.

Justices of the Peace Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 1420

Coal Mines Certificates Bill.—Read 3^a, with the Amendment, and passed, and returned to the Commons... 1420

House adjourned at ten minutes past Five o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: FRIDAY, 19TH JUNE, 1903.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH.—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz. :—

Willesden Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; Didcot, Newbury, and Southampton Railway Bill [Lords]; Scottish American Mortgage Company, Limited, Bill [Lords]; Fife Electric Power Bill [Lords]; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill [Lords]; Liverpool University Bill [Lords]; Barry Railway Bill [Lords]; Taff Vale Railway Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time 1420

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for the following Bill the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz. :—

Alexandra Park and Palace Bill.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders 1420

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO NOT COMPLIED WITH).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have not been complied with, viz. :—

Rochester Corporation Tramways and Improvements Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders 1420

Harrogate Water Bill [LORDS]; Rickmansworth Gas Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 1421

Broughty Ferry Gas Provisional Order Bill; Hamilton Burgh Provisional Order Bill; Military Lands Provisional Orders Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 1421

Derby Gas Bill [LORDS]; Manchester Southern Tramways Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 1421

Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [LORDS]. Read the first time; referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 250.] 1421

Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [LORDS]. -Read the first time; referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed [Bill 251.] 1421

St. Luke's Church and Parish Quoad Sacra, Edinburgh, Order Confirmation Bill [LORDS].—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment 1421

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill.—As amended, considered, to be read the third time upon Monday next 1421

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill.—Consideration, as amended, deferred till Wednesday next 1421

Local Government Provisional Order (No. 18) Bill.—As amended, considered, to be read the third time upon Monday next 1421

ALEXANDRA PARK AND PALACE.—Petition for Bill; referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders 1421

PETITIONS.

BURGH POLICE (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Perth, for alteration; to lie upon the Table 1421

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.—Petitions against: from Tenterden; Chichester; Bristol; Leytonstone; and Southport; to lie upon the Table 1422

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petition from Southport, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1422

LICENCES (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL).—Three Petitions from London, for legislation; to lie upon the Table... 1422

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.—Petition from Callington, against; to lie upon the Table 1422

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL.—Petition from Callington, against; to be laid upon the Table 1422

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL, AND LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.—Petitions against: from Plymouth (six); and Basford; to lie upon the Table 1422

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petition from Bathgate, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1422

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.—Petitions against: from Wateringbury; and Southport; to lie upon the Table 1422

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL.—Petitions in favour: from Newcastle-upon-Tyne; Burnley; Newmilns; and East Greenwich; to lie upon the Table 1422

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.—Petition from Westminster, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1422

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SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.—Two Petitions from Falmouth, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1422

SHOPS (EARLY CLOSING) BILL.—Petition from Southport, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1422

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.—Copy presented, of Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and modified and confirmed by the Board of Trade, authorising the construction of Light Railways in the county of Kent, in the county borough of Canterbury, and in the rural districts of Bridge and of Blean, and in the urban district of Herne Bay (Canterbury and Herne Bay Light Railway Order, 1903) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1423

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896. Copy presented, of Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and modified and confirmed by the Board of Trade, authorising the County Council of Middlesex to take lands for widening roads on which Light Railways will be laid in the parishes of Edgware, Finchley, Friern Barnet, Hendon, Kingsbury, Little Stanmore, Southgate, Tottenham, Willesden, and Wood Green, in the county of Middlesex (County of Middlesex Light Railways (Lands) Orders, 1903) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1423

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.—Copy presented, of Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and modified and confirmed by the Board of Trade, authorising the construction of Light Railways between Stockton Heath and Northwich, and elsewhere in the county of Chester (Warrington and Northwich Light Railways Order, 1903) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1423

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896. –Copy presented, of Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and confirmed by the Board of Trade, authorising the compulsory purchase of lands for the purposes of Colne and Trawden Light Railways Order, 1901, and for other purposes (Colne and Trawden Light Railways (Acquisition of Lands Amendment) Order, 1903) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1423

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896. –Copy presented, of Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and modified and confirmed by the Board of Trade, authorising the construction of Light Railways in the county borough of Warrington and in the parishes of Stockton Heath and Latchford Without in the county of Chester (Warrington Corporation Light Railways Order, 1903) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table... 1423

AFRICA (No 6, 1903).—Copy presented, of Report by His Majesty's Commissioner on the East Africa Protectorate [by Command]; to lie upon the Table ... 1424

WELLINGTON COLLEGE.—Copy presented, of Report of the Governors of Wellington College for the year ending 31st December, 1902, with Accounts [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1424

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act for further promoting the Revision of the Statute Law by repealing Enactments which have ceased to be in force or have become unnecessary." [Statute Law Revision (Scotland) Bill [Lords.] 1424

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Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Gas and Water Works Facilities Act, 1870, relating to Cobham Gas, Conisbrough Gas, Hailsham Gas, St. Ives (Hunts) Gas, and Woking District Gas." [Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled "An Act to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Gas and Water Works Facilities Act, 1870, relating to Brading Harbour District Gas, Crossgates, Halton, and Seacroft Gas, Herne Bay Gas, Pembroke Docks and Town Gas, and Riddings District Gas." [Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for consolidating the capital of the Derby Gas Light and Coke Company; for enabling that Company to raise additional capital; and for other purposes." [Derby Gas Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to incorporate the Manchester Southern Tramways Company, and to empower that Company to make and maintain tramways and other works in the county palatine of Lancaster and in the county of Chester; and for other purposes." [Manchester Southern Tramways (Lancashire) Bill [Lords], and Manchester Southern Tramways (Cheshire) Bill [Lords], now "Manchester Southern Tramways Bill [Lords."] 1424

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.—Third Report brought up, and read; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 212.] 1425

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

INSPECTION OF "REGISTERED PLACES" (CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT, 1876).—Question, Dr. Shipman (Northampton); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas ... 1425

SUFFRAGAN BISHOPS AND PAROCHIAL APPOINTMENTS.—Question, Mr. Channing (Northamptonshire, E.); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 1425

IRISH LIGHTS BOARD—REPORT OF INSPECTIONS.—Question, Sir John Leng (Dundee); Answer, Mr. Bonar Law 1426

PREFERENTIAL TARIFFS.—Question, Mr. Herbert Samuel (Yorkshire, Cleveland); Answer, Mr. Bonar Law 1427

GOODS IMPORTED INTO THE UNITED KINGDOM READY FOR USE.—Question, Mr. Herbert Samuel; Answer, Mr. Bonar Law 1427

HANWELL POOR LAW SCHOOLS—DISMISSAL OF DR. BARRETT.—Question, Dr. Thompson (Monaghan, N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1428

ARMY BLANKETS FROM SOUTH AFRICA AT WOOLWICH DOCKYARD.—Question, Sir Thomas Dewar (Tower Hamlets, St. George's); Answer, Mr. Brodrick ... 1429

TELEGRAPHIC INTERRUPTIONS BETWEEN UNITED KINGDOM AND AUSTRALIA.—Question, Sir John Colomb (Great Yarmouth); Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 1429

THE PACIFIC CABLE.—Questions, Sir John Colomb; Answers, Mr. J. Chamberlain 1430

Elementary Education Amendment Bill—[THIRD READING.]—Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

Sir John Gorst (Cambridge University) 1431
Sir Francis Powell (Wigan) 1440

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Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'be,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 're-committed to a Select Committee.'"—(*Sir John Gorst.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. Heywood Johnstone (*Sussex, Horsham*) 1442
Mr. Herbert Samuel (*Yorkshire, Cleveland*) 1449
Sir J. Batty Tuke (*Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities*) 1449
The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education (*Sir William Anson, Oxford University*) 1450
Sir Joseph Leese (*Lancashire, Accrington*)... 1452

Question put.

The House divided: Ayes, 149; Noes, 87. (Division List No. 123.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

Outdoor Relief (Pensioners) Bill—[THIRD READING.]—Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [12th June], "That the Bill be now read the third time."

Question again proposed. Debate resumed.

Mr. Caldwell (*Lanarkshire, Mid.*)... 1455
Col. Blundell (*Lancashire, Ince*) 1457
Lord Hugh Cecil (*Greenwich*) 1458

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

County Courts Jurisdiction Extension Bill.—As amended (by the Standing Committee) considered.

Sir Frederick Banbury (*Camberwell, Peckham*) 1460

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 13, to leave out the words 'one hundred,' and to insert the word 'sixty.'"—(*Sir Frederick Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'one hundred' stand part of the Bill."

Sir Albert Rollit (*Islington, S.*) 1461
Sir William Holland (*Yorkshire, W.R., Rotherham*) 1461
Mr. Griffith Boscawen (*Kent, Tunbridge*) 1461
Sir James Woodhouse (*Huddersfield*) 1462
Mr. Samuel Roberts (*Sheffield, Ecclesall*) 1462
Mr. Duke (*Plymouth*) 1462
Mr. Charles McArthur (*Liverpool, Exchange*) 1464
Mr. Eugene Wason (*Clackmannan and Kinross*) 1464
The Solicitor-General (*Sir Edward Carson, Dublin University*) 1464
Sir Henry Fowler (*Wolverhampton, E.*) 1465

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 197; Noes, 53. (Division List, No. 124.)

Sir William Tomlinson (*Preston*) 1467

Amendment proposed—

"That with actions brought within the limits of the jurisdiction of a County Court by the provisions of the Act and in which proper steps have been taken by either party to require a jury to be summoned Section 102 of the County Courts Act 1888 shall be read as if the word 'twelve' were substituted for five.'"

Mr. Brynmor Jones (*Swansea District*) 1469
Mr. Cripps (*Lancashire, Stretford*) 1469
Mr. Griffith Boscawen 1470
Sir Albert Rollit 1470
Lord Hugh Cecil (*Greenwich*) 1470

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

"To leave out the word 'twelve' in order to insert the word 'nine.'"—(*Lord Hugh Cecil.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment as amended agreed to.

Sir William Tomlinson 1471

Amendment proposed—

"To omit Clause 4."—(*Sir William Tomlinson.*)

Sir Albert Rollit 1471
Mr. Griffith Boscawen 1471

Amendment agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."—(*Sir Albert Rollit.*)

Sir Edward Carson... 1472
Sir William Tomlinson 1472
Lord Hugh Cecil 1472

And, it being half-past Five of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Friday next.

Adjourned at twenty-seven minutes before Six o'clock till Monday next.

END OF TABLE OF CONTENTS TO VOLUME CXXIII.

THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(*AUTHORISED EDITION*)

IN THE

FOURTH SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*, IN THE
THIRD YEAR OF THE REIGN OF

HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII.

SIXTH VOLUME OF SESSION.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 27th May, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

East Ardsley Gas Bill. Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Blackheath and Greenwich District Electric Light Bill, Wolverhampton and Cannock Chase Railway (Extension of Time) Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 8) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 11) Bill; Naval Works Provisional Order Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) Provisional Order. Bill to confirm a Provisional Order under the Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) Act, 1863, and the Acts amending the same, relating to the Pallas River Drainage District in the county of Tipperary. Ordered to be brought in by Mr. Arthur Elliot and Mr. Wyndham.

Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) Provisional Order Bill. "To confirm a Provisional Order under the Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) Act, 1863, and the Acts amending the same, relating to the Pallas River Drainage District, in the county of Tipperary." Presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. (Bill 217.)

Local Government Provisional Order (No. 18). Bill to confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board relating to Wolverhampton. Ordered to be brought in by Mr. Grant Lawson and Mr. Walter Long.

Local Government Provisional Order (No. 18) Bill. "To confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board relating to Wolverhampton." Presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. (Bill 218.)

Hamilton Burgh Provisional Order. Bill to confirm a Provisional Order under the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act, 1892, relating to Hamilton Burgh Water and Town Hall. Ordered to be brought in by the Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.

Hamilton Burgh Provisional Order Bill. "To confirm a Provisional Order under the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act, 1892, relating to Hamilton Burgh Water and Town Hall." Presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. (Bill 219.)

Grangemouth Water Order Confirmation. Bill to confirm a Provisional Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to Grangemouth Water, ordered to be brought in by the Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor-General for Scotland.

Grangemouth Water Order Confirmation Bill. "To confirm a Provisional Order under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to Grangemouth Water." Presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 9th June, and to be printed. (Bill 220.)

Edinburgh Corporation (Markets, Slaughter Houses, etc.) Order Confirmation. Bill to confirm a Provisional Order under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to Edinburgh Corporation (Markets, Slaughter Houses, etc.). Ordered to be brought in by the Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor-General for Scotland.

Edinburgh Corporation (Markets, Slaughter Houses, etc.) Order Confirmation Bill. "To confirm a Provisional Order under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to Edinburgh Corporation (Markets, Slaughter Houses, etc.)." Presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 9th June, and to be printed. (Bill 221.)

Lanarkshire Electricity and Refuse Destruction Order Confirmation. Bill to confirm a Provisional Order under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to Lanarkshire Electricity and Refuse Destruction. Ordered to be brought in by the Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor-General for Scotland.

Lanarkshire Electricity and Refuse Destruction Order Confirmation Bill. "To confirm a Provisional Order under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to Lanarkshire Electricity and Refuse Destruction." Presented and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 9th June, and to be printed. (Bill 222.)

South Shields Corporation Bill. Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

POLICE AND SANITARY COMMITTEE.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE reported from the Police and Sanitary Committee that the parties promoting the Erith Tramways and Improvement Bill had stated that the evidence of Arthur Elliston Collins, city engineer, Norwich, was essential to their case; and, it having been proved that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said Arthur Elliston Collins do attend the said Committee on Wednesday, 10th June, at half-past eleven of the clock.

Ordered, that Arthur Elliston Collins do attend the Police and Sanitary Committee on Wednesday, the 10th day of June next, at half-past eleven of the clock.

PETITIONS.

BURGH POLICE (SCOTLAND) BILL

Petitions for alteration: from Ayr; and Dundee; to lie upon the Table.

COAL MINES REGULATION BILL.

Petition from Mosley Common, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, against; to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petitions against (praying to be heard by Counsel): from County Council of Kent; and East London Railway Company; to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petition from London, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Leyland and Farrington; Stanbury; Bletchley and Fenny Stratford; Wolverton; Market-Harborough; Grangemouth; Bonnyrigg; Sawston; Walton-le-Dale; Colne; Beswick; Blaydon; and, Falmouth; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HOUSES (HOURS OF CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Dundee, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE DISPUTES BILL.

Petition from Mosley Common, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

COLLEGE CHARTER ACT, 1871 (OWENS COLLEGE, MANCHESTER, AND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LIVERPOOL).

Paper (presented 26th May) to be printed. (No. 174.)

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Copy presented, of (1) Associations constituted under The Voluntary Schools Act, 1897; (2) Associated Schools and amounts of Aid Grant paid; (3) Unassociated Schools and amounts of Aid Grant paid, 1902–3 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (AGRICULTURAL RETURNS).

Copy presented, of Agricultural Returns for Great Britain, with Statistics for the United Kingdom, British Possessions, and Foreign Countries for 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1899.

Copy presented, of Report by the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords and the Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons, under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, that they are of opinion that the provisions of the Scottish Central Electric Power Order, the Scottish Ontario and Manitoba Land Company, Limited, Order, and the Hutcheson's Hospital and Hutcheson's Educational Trust Order are of such a character that they ought to be dealt with by Private Bills and not by Provisional Orders [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 180.)

SUPERANNUATIONS.

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 15th May 1903, declaring that for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the office of Deputy Master and Controller of the Royal Mint, professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired in the Public Service are required [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE (FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND BRITISH POSSESSIONS).

Copy presented, of Annual Statement of the Trade of the United Kingdom with Foreign Countries and British Possessions for 1902. Volume II. [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

Papers laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House:—

CHARITABLE ENDOWMENTS (LONDON).

Further Return relative thereto (ordered 2nd August 1894.—*Mr. Francis Stevenson*); to be printed. (No. 181.)

MEDWAY CONSERVANCY.

Copy of Statement of Receipts and Expenditure of the Conservators for the year ending 25th March 1903 [by Act].

INTOXICATING LIQUORS (LICENCES REFUSED).

Address for "Return of the number of victuallers', beerhouse, and other licences for the sale of intoxicating liquors the renewal of which has been refused at the general annual licensing meetings and adjournments thereof held in England and Wales during February and March, 1903, showing in each case the ground of the refusal, especially where such ground was in any instance that the licence was not required; with the number of cases in which notice of appeal was given, and the result of such appeal (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 141, of the present Session of 1903.)."—(*Mr Cochrane.*)

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION.

Copy ordered, "of Statistical Tables relating to Emigration and Immigration from and into the United Kingdom in the year 1902, and Report to the Board of Trade thereon."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Irish Representation on Trades Disputes Commission.

MR. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green): To ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in the appointment of the Trades Disputes Commission, he will see that a representative of Irish trades unionism is appointed.

(*Answered by Mr. A. J. Balfour.*) If the Commission were to be a large and representative one, the request of the hon. Member would be a proper matter for consideration.

Payment of Pieceworkers.

MR. HUNTER CRAIG (Lanarkshire, Govan): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the practice of employers of labour, particularly in the shipbuilding trade, when paying their pieceworkers, to hand each a sum of money to represent the amount earned, but refuse to give any details of the amount; and will he take steps to remedy this alleged grievance.

(*Answered by Mr Secretary Akers-Douglas.*) Some time ago I received a representation on the subject from the Boiler Makers' and Iron Shipbuilders' Society, representing the workmen in Glasgow, who ask that the "particulars" section of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, may be applied to the industry. I at once directed an inquiry into the matter, which is one of much difficulty. The inquiry is not yet concluded.

Artificial Sewage Schemes.

MR. JOHN WILSON (Durham, Mid): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will give a Return showing the number of sewage schemes by artificial process alone, the names of the authorities, with the amount of loan in each case.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) In consequence of the recommendation made by the Royal Commission on Sewage Disposal in their Interim Report, the Local Government Board have in some special cases made an exception to their ordinary rule, and have sanctioned loans for schemes of the kind referred to without requiring that the sewage shall be applied to land. The names of the authorities in these cases and the amount of the loans sanctioned are as follows—Easington Rural District Council, £7,000; Gorton Urban District Council, £21,519; Pontefract Town Council, £15,506; Blackwell Rural District Council, £6,840; Heywood Town Council, £21,500; I have of course not included in this statement cases in which the sewage is discharged directly into the sea or into tidal waters.

Infected Army Blankets

MR. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he is aware that two consignments of Army blankets infected with typhoid germs reached the city of Nottingham; that, although the Health Committee of the city took steps to prevent the further distribution of these blankets, some portions of the consignments in question had already been sold and distributed to villages in the neighbourhood; and, if so, will he state what steps he is taking in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) I have communicated with the town clerk of Nottingham on the subject, who has informed me this morning that, in consequence of the action taken by the medical officer of health in notifying the persons in the villages referred to who purchased the blankets, the whole of these articles have been sent back to the firm in Nottingham who supplied them. The town clerk adds that all the blankets which reached Nottingham, some hundreds in number, are in process of disinfection.

Anglesey Education Scheme.

Mr. ELLIS GRIFFITH (Anglesey): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether, seeing that the Board of Education have given notice that they intend to amend the Anglesey intermediate scheme, he will consider the advisability of inserting provisions in the amended scheme to improve the financial position of the Beaumaris county school.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) The amendment of the Anglesey scheme, of which notice has been given, is confined to the extension of the age limit to which scholars may remain in the school, and is urgently required to remove a difficulty which has arisen in connection with the award of county exhibitions on the result of the approaching school examinations. In the circumstances, the Board have decided not to endanger or delay the passing of the amendment by associating with it a question which would undoubtedly give rise to prolonged discussion, and which, in the opinion of the Board, can only be solved by recourse to funds outside the operation of the county scheme.

Illegal Trawling in Red Wharf Bay.

Mr. ELLIS GRIFFITH: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the fact that trawling operations are now carried on in Red Wharf Bay, contrary to regulations within the three-mile limit; and, if so, whether he will take such measures as will ensure the discontinuance of the practice.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) No, Sir. My attention has not been called to trawling operations in Red Wharf Bay. The Lancashire and Western Sea Fisheries Committee have made by-laws for the regulation of trawling within their district, and any breaches of those by-laws should be brought to the notice of the Committee.

Alleged Grievances of Postal Telegraph Clerks.

Captain NORTON (Newington, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General if he can state whether, seeing that the request of the London branch of the Postal Telegraph Clerks Association for a personal interview for the purpose of asking for a revision of the scales of pay, and the desire that the claim for operators to receive a maximum salary of £190 per annum should be submitted to arbitration were refused; and that a section of the staff some of them members of this Association, have been promised a personal interview since the announcement of the reference of the whole question to the consideration of five business men, he is now prepared to give the Association the same treatment as the more senior men, and settle the case by receiving the men and inquiring personally into the matters.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) All the facts in relation to the claim of certain operators in the Central Telegraph Office to receive a maximum salary of £190 are well known to me; I have myself personally investigated their case, and have given a decision which, as far as I am concerned, must be considered as final. Under these circumstances, a personal interview upon the subject is unnecessary.

Foreign Tobacco Imported into India—Proposed Duty.

Sir MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE (Bethnal Green, N.E.): To ask the Secretary of State for India if he will state the quantity and value of foreign tobacco imported into India; and whether, seeing that it is not liable to any duty except the general Customs duty charged on all imported goods, he will consult the Government of India as to the advisability of imposing a duty on foreign and local grown tobacco, with a view to repeal wholly or in part the duty on salt in view of the effect of the restricted use of that article upon the prevalence of leprosy in India.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) The imports of foreign tobacco into India during the last two years were :—1901-2, 4,416,688 lbs., value, £300,158 ; 1902-3, 4,199,403 lbs., value, £297,669. A tobacco excise or State monopoly in India has been frequently considered and rejected as impracticable. Lord Herschell's Indian Currency Committee reported in 1893 that it would involve constant and vexatious interference with the people, and that the cost of collecting and enforcing the tax would be enormous in proportion to the sum realised.

Plague in India—Inoculation.

MR WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) : To ask the Secretary of State for India if he will state the number of persons who have died of plague in the Punjab since the 1st January last, and what percentage of these persons were inoculated with plague serum.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) The number of persons who have died of plague in the Punjab, whose population is 22,500,000, between the 1st January 1903, and the 2nd May (the latest date for which figures have been received) is 141,789. The returns do not distinguish deaths of inoculated persons from deaths of persons not inoculated.

Somaliland Campaign—Agreements with Italy and Abyssinia.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) : To ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether there is any agreement with regard to the war now being waged in Somaliland either with Italy or with Abyssinia beyond what has been brought already under the cognisance of this House ; and, if so, whether he will state what such agreement or agreements are ; and whether the Mad Mullah has ever been informed of the conditions under which he will be left in peace, or any attempts have been made to enter into negotiations with that potentate.

(*Answered by Lord Cranborne.*) The answer to both Questions is in the negative.

Treaties between Persia and Great Britain.

MR. LABOUCHERE : To ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether there is any treaty between this country and Persia, or whether there exists any pledge given by Persia to this country, by which Persia is in any way restrained from dealing with her territories on the Persian Gulf or in any other part of her dominions as she pleases ; and, if there does exist any such treaty or pledge which has not already been laid upon the Table of the House, whether it will be so laid.

(*Answered by Lord Cranborne.*) There is no treaty of the kind indicated, but in regard to Southern Persia, His Majesty's Government enjoy certain rights admitted by the Persian Government. As the hon. Member is no doubt aware, there is an agreement between this country and Russia for the maintenance of the integrity and independence of Persia.

Improvement of Primary Schools in Ireland.

MR. JOHN MURPHY (Kerry, E.) : To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will consider the propriety of using portion of the equivalent grant for the purpose of improving the heating and other accommodation of primary schools in Ireland ; the free grant of books and other requisites for poor children attending such schools ; and the creation of a fund for the assistance of children who are too poor to procure higher education otherwise.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) I have nothing at present to add to the replies already given by me to similar Questions.

Primary Education in Ireland.

Mr. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to resolutions lately passed by the South Kerry Teachers' Organisation claiming that portion of the equivalent grant should be devoted to the necessities of primary education; and, if so, whether he will take these representations into consideration.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The reply to this Question is in the affirmative.

Evicted Tenants in County Waterford.

Mr. O'SHEE (Waterford, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what is the number of evicted tenants in the county Waterford included in the Return recently prepared; and whether a list of the names is yet available.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The number will be found in the Return which has been laid upon the Table of the House (No. 125 of this session). It is not proposed to publish the names of the evicted tenants.

War Rewards—Case of Mr. A. J. Vogan.

Mr. ELLIS GRIFFITH: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the case of Mr. A. J. Vogan, late sergeant of "A" Squadron, New Zealand (Prince of Wales') Light Horse, who during the late South African War served with distinction as a sergeant of Scouts under the Field Intelligence Department, and captured Commandant Scheepers, for whose capture rewards had been offered; and whether, seeing that Major Bramley, his commanding officer, recommended this man for the Distinguished Service medal, he will explain why Vogan has received neither medal nor reward, and state whether he will take steps to ensure that Vogan's services shall receive recognition.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) Sergeant Vogan's claims to reward were fully considered, but owing to the large number of even more deserving cases it was found impracticable to include his name amongst those nominated for reward.

Arrest of the Minister at Rustenberg.

Sir WILFRID LAWSON (Cornwall, Camborne): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will make inquiry as to whether, and if so, upon what charge, the minister of Rustenberg, in the Transvaal Colony, was recently arrested and imprisoned by the resident magistrate, and upon whose information; and whether the Attorney-General has taken any steps for the release of the rev. gentleman, and upon what grounds.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) I have no information as to the incident referred to, but I will make inquiry.

Chinese Labour in the Transvaal Mines.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that the Rand Native Labour Association has sent persons to China to inquire into possibilities of procuring Chinese to work in the Transvaal mines under contract; and whether the House will have an opportunity to express an opinion as to such importations being permitted before they are allowed by Lord Milner.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) I am aware of the fact stated in the first part of the Question. There is, of course, nothing to prevent the House from discussing the question, but, in my opinion, such discussion at the present time would be entirely premature.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Destruction of Army Rations in the Transvaal.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will explain why £150,000 worth of Army rations were recently destroyed by order of the authorities in the Transvaal instead of being sold.

The SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford): A large quantity of tinned rations were found by a Board of Officers to have so much deteriorated as to be unfit for consumption, and, in accordance with the advice of the expert medical officers, were destroyed. Under the regulations supplies which have been condemned as unfit for issue as food for the troops, owing to deterioration, are not to be sold, but destroyed. The General Officer Commanding South Africa has been instructed to report fully on the matter by mail.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: Can the right hon. Gentleman say what was the value of the food destroyed, and by whom it was supplied?

Mr. BRODRICK: I cannot give the value of the rations until I have received the Report. As regards the firms who provided it, it is the universal custom of those firms not to keep a very large supply, because after a certain time tinned goods of this character deteriorate. But, of course, the amount of rations in South Africa at the close of the war was vastly greater in extent of what would have been supplied if we had known the troops would be so quickly withdrawn.

Disease Infected Blankets from South Africa

Mr. MANSFIELD (Lincolnshire, Spalding): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that fever-infected blankets recently used by the troops in South Africa have been distributed in this country, and that some of the blankets in question are saturated with blood and filth; and, if so, will he explain why these blankets have been allowed to be distributed; what steps he proposes to take to recover them; and whether instructions will be given to prevent any further articles of this nature being despatched from South Africa or distributed to the public; and whether, in view of the danger to public health caused by the distribution of articles used during military operations, he will appoint a Committee to consider the best methods of treating and disposing of them.

Mr. BRODRICK: Will the hon. Member kindly refer to my reply to Questions put on this subject on Monday last, to which I have at present nothing to add. †

Imperial Yeomanry.

Mr. MANSFIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, in view of the fact that 14,000 of the 17,243 men comprising the 1901 batch of Imperial Yeomanry had complained, will he state what percentage of complaints were owing to men not receiving a month's furlough, or pay in lieu thereof, after landing in England and before discharge, as in the case of reservists; what percentage were owing to the stopping of bounties or gratuities; and what percentage were direct claims against officers commanding companies respectively.

Mr. BRODRICK: In only a small percentage of cases was the question of furlough money raised as a single complaint, but many added it to a composite claim. Bounties or gratuities were only stopped in the cases of men who had been guilty of misconduct, numbering rather less than fifty. The remainder were direct claims against the assessment of officers commanding companies, in most cases to the effect that they had not actually received the amounts entered against them in the pay lists.

Scottish Horse Mutineers.

Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state for what offence men of the Scottish Horse were sentenced to terms of imprisonment; how many were undergoing imprisonment at the termination of the war; whether any have since been released; and, if so, how many; and whether any distinction as regards food, housing, and general treatment is made between these men and ordinary criminals; have any of the men of the Scottish Horse who were sentenced been or are employed with convicts on the Capetown breakwater.

Mr. BRODRICK: Twenty-one men of the Scottish Horse were convicted of mutiny in March, 1902, and twenty were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment and one to three years penal servitude. They were all undergoing sentence at the end of the war. All have since been released, except the man sentenced to penal servitude, whose sentence has been commuted to two years imprisonment and the further remission of which will be considered in August. The sentences have all been undergone in military prisons.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxii., 1631.

Mr. WEIR: But were the men employed with convicts on the Capetown breakwater?

Mr. BRODRICK: I am not aware of such employment. My information is that the sentences were carried out in military prisons.

Somaliland—Behaviour of Native Troops.

Mr. LAMBERT (Devonshire, South Molton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has any official information to the effect that a mutinous spirit has been shown by any of the native troops now employed in Somaliland; and, if so, will he state what action he proposes to take in the matter.

Mr. BRODRICK: No such report has been received in the War Office.

Naval Medical and Accountant Officers.

Mr. CAREW (Meath, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, with reference to the portion of the statement issued by the First Lord of the Admiralty with the Navy Estimates as to the re-adjustment of the relative rank of medical and accountant officers of the Royal Navy, when he expects to be able to give the details which were then in process of being worked out.

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Arnold-Forster, Belfast, W.): The details of the re-adjustment in question are still under the consideration of the Board of Admiralty, but an announcement on the subject may be expected shortly.

Lord Milner.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether arrangements have been made, or are in contemplation, for giving Lord Milner leave of absence; and in that case for what period, and by whom will the duties of High Commissioner be discharged.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. J. Chamberlain, Birmingham, W.): Lord Milner proposes to take a short holiday away from South Africa during the present summer. His duties will be discharged during his absence by Sir Arthur Lawley, in virtue of a dormant Commission which appoints the Officer Administering the Government of the Transvaal to be High Commissioner in such a contingency.

Transvaal Legislative Council.

Mr. LAMBERT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will indicate where can be found the authentic reasons of Generals Botha, Delarey, and Smuts for refusing to join the Transvaal Legislative Council.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The reasons for refusal were given in a correspondence with Lord Milner, which was published in the Transvaal newspapers in February. I have had a copy of this correspondence placed in the Library.

Disturbances in Eastern Roumelia.

Mr. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether he has received any official information from] Bulgaria showing that fugitive men, women, and children have reached Burgas, in Eastern Roumelia, from the villages of Karaklisse, Beleirien, Derakeny, etc., in the district of Lozan, to the east of Adrianople, or that these districts have been rebellious or infested by bands; and whether his Majesty's Government will cause some inquiry to be made into the circumstances under which this population is being sent from its home.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord Cranborne, Rochester): No information to the effect stated has been received from His Majesty's representatives, nor have His Majesty's Government been informed that the population of the districts in question is being removed. Inquiry will be made.

Finance—Duties on Colonial Products.

Mr. LAMBERT: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he proposes any modifications of the Finance Bill to afford preferential duties in the case of colonial products.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): No, Sir.

Gambling in Grain—Taxes on Options.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): On behalf of the hon. Member for the St. Patrick Division of Dublin, I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will consider the advisability of imposing a tax upon options and future contracts representing fictitious grain, flour, and other commodities, in view of the volume and value of these transactions.

MR. RITCHIE: This question has often been considered; but I doubt whether it would be possible to devise a tax which would hit speculative options without falling upon genuine and legitimate transactions at the same time.

Vivisection in the Metropolis.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state the number of laboratories in the Metropolis at which vivisection is practised, and the number of dogs subjected to experiments at these laboratories during the year 1902.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. AKERS DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): I think I must refer the hon. Member to the annual Return under the Act of 1896 for the year 1902, which will be presented immediately, and will soon, I hope, be issued to Members. This will give him the information he desires except that experiments on cats and dogs are not distinguished in the Reports made to the Secretary of State and embodied in the Return.

Bristol Post Office Sports—Motor Fatality.

MR. MANSFIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the fatal motor accident at the Bristol Post Office Sports, on Saturday, by which three lives were lost, and other persons were seriously injured; and, if so, in view of the fatal accidents which have occurred through motor racing, will he consider the question of introducing legislation to regulate the same.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. WALTER LONG, Bristol, S.): My right hon. friend has asked me to answer this Question. My attention has been drawn to the sad accident to which the hon. Member refers. As regards the suggestion in the last part of the Question the matter will receive consideration, but it would seem to me that the question of regulating the racing at Sports and similar meetings is hardly one to be dealt with in a Bill relating to the use of motor-cars on highways.

MR. SCOTT MONTAGU (Hampshire, New Forest): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that this accident, which we all deplore, was on a prepared track and not on a public road, and that it was a motor cycle and not a motor-car accident?

MR. WALTER LONG: Yes, that is exactly what I pointed out.

Regulation of Motor-Car Traffic.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to two recent fatal motor-car accidents, one at Kew Bridge on Sunday the 24th instant, when a gentleman who was waiting for a tramcar was knocked down and killed, the other at Edinburgh on Saturday, the 23rd instant; and, in view of recent motor-car accidents, will he say when he proposes to bring in a Bill to deal with the speed and identification of motor-cars.

MR. WEIR: I beg also to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will consider the expediency of taking steps to require drivers of motor-cars to secure certificates of competency.

MR. WALTER LONG: I have seen newspaper paragraphs relating to the accidents referred to. I hope to introduce a Bill as to motor-cars shortly after Whitsuntide. The points referred to in the questions will receive consideration in connection with this measure; but of course I cannot say what the provisions of the Bill will be.

MR. WEIR: If the right hon. Gentleman will bring in the Bill to-morrow he may rest assured that it will have all the assistance possible.

SIR HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) asked whether the Bill would be first introduced in the Lords or in the Commons?

MR. WALTER LONG: The other House has been suggested, but the matter is not yet decided.

Irish Cattle Trade Losses.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the hon. Member for North Hunts, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he can give the mortality amongst cattle and sheep shipped from Ireland to English and Scotch ports during the year 1902, and also during what has transpired of the year 1903.

MR. AILWYN FELLOWES (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey): One hundred and thirty-seven cattle were reported to have been lost on the voyage from Ireland to English or Scotch ports during the year 1902 out of a total shipment of 959,000. The losses amongst sheep were reported to have been 152 out of a total of 1,056,000. During the present year the losses reported have been eighty-two out of a total shipment of 275,000 cattle and fifty-seven out of a total shipment of 98,000 sheep.

Regulation of Irish Cattle Trade.

MR. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the hon. Member for North Huntingdonshire, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether, in view of the Animals (Transit and General) Order of 1895, he will state whether cattle shipped from Irish to English and Scotch ports are carried in pens of the prescribed dimensions and construction, with battens to prevent slipping and to protect from collision against ships' fittings, etc., in rough weather; how many inspectors report on this traffic; and at what ports are they stationed.

MR. AILWYN FELLOWES: All cattle shipped from Ireland to Great Britain must be carried in pens, and in the case of vessels not regularly employed in the trade prior to May, 1895, these pens must be of certain prescribed dimensions and construction. In every case the floor of the pens must be fitted with battens or other footholds to prevent slipping, and ships' fittings likely to cause injury and unnecessary suffering must be fenced off. Forty-seven ship inspectors are stationed at the eighteen Irish ports from which cattle are shipped, whose duty it is to examine vessels and to see that the different requirements of the Transit Orders are complied with. The Irish Veterinary Inspection Staff, to the number of twenty-four, also exercise supervision in the matter. On this side of the Channel the oversight of the trade forms part of the regular duties of the four Inspectors of the Board of Agriculture within whose Divisions Irish cattle are landed, and these inspectors from time to time make journeys in vessels carrying live-stock in order to satisfy themselves that the trade is properly carried on. It is also the duty of the various local authorities to execute and enforce the provisions of our Order, and some of these authorities have appointed inspectors for this special purpose.

Mercantile Marine—Fishermen and Sir Edward Fry's Award.

MR. DOUGHTY (Great Grimsby): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will consider the advisability of placing fishermen on the same footing as other seamen in the Mercantile Marine by remitting the fee of 6d. charged to them for signing the ship's log book at the offices of the Board of Trade when they join or leave their ships, in view of the effect of this charge upon the working of Sir Edward Fry's award in the fishery dispute of 1901.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BONAR LAW, Glasgow, Blackfriars): The arrangement made by the Board of Trade in connection with Sir Edward Fry's award is a purely voluntary one, and was agreed to on the express condition that the additional expense incurred should be met by the imposition of a small fee on each engagement or discharge. The Board of Trade will consider whether it is possible to make any reduction in the fees charged without imposing an obligation on public funds.

Avoch (Ross-shire) Channel Lights.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will state when the Northern Lighthouse Commissioners propose to carry out the scheme for lighting the channel off Avoch, Ross-shire, which has already been sanctioned.

MR. BONAR LAW: I am informed by the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses that they hope to carry out the scheme for lighting the channel off Avoch during the coming autumn.

Highland Tweeds at the St. Louis Exhibition.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if the Congested Districts Board for Scotland will consider the expediency of arranging for an exhibit of Highland homespun tweeds at the St. Louis Exhibition.

*THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SCOTT DICKSON, Glasgow, Bridgton): The initiative in this matter must be left to enterprise of a private nature, but in the event of any proposition of the kind suggested by the hon. Member being made on behalf of the Scottish Home Industries Association or other similar Society to the Congested Districts Board, the matter would be open to consideration.

Oliver Cromwell's Bust.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the hon. Member for West Derby, as representing the First Commissioner of Works, whether a bust of Oliver Cromwell, presented by a private individual, will be removed from its present position until a proper site has been found for the statues of statesmen erected by the desire or at the cost of the nation; and, if he will say by whose authority the bust, being the gift of a private individual not being a Member of this House, was placed in its present position.

MR. VICTOR CAVENDISH (Derbyshire, W.): The statues of statesmen in the Central Lobby were the gifts of private individuals, and are upon precisely the same footing in that respect as the bust of Cromwell is. This bust was presented to the House of Commons and accepted on its behalf by the Leader of the House; and it was placed in its present position by arrangement with the donor, under the instructions of the First Commissioner of Works. It is not proposed to remove it to another site.

MR. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): Who was the donor of this bust?

MR. VICTOR CAVENDISH: I believe it is generally known who it was.

Grants to Voluntary Schools—Return.

MR. TREVELYAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury when the Return will be presented to the House of Grants to Voluntary Schools from Departments other than the Board of Education.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. ELLIOT, Durham): The Return has been presented and is now with the printers. It will be issued, I hope, before Parliament reassembles after Whitsuntide.

Belfast Valuation Appeals.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether the Commissioner of Valuation has held conferences with the appellants against the new valuation of Belfast in April and May, as promised last December; and, if not, when will this engagement be carried out.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.): No, Sir; but the Commissioner hopes to arrange to hold the conferences next month.

O'Callagan's Mills (County Clare) Post Office.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if the sub-office at O'Callagan's Mills, County

Clare, is to be closed; and, if so, will he state why this course is to be taken.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.): The office is not closed. Business has merely been removed to temporary premises pending the rebuilding of the Post Office premises, which were in bad condition.

Wicklow Harbour.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he will cause a survey to be made of the harbour of Wicklow in pursuance of Section 39 of the Dublin Corporation Waterworks Act, 1861, to ascertain whether the harbour or channel of Wicklow has been damaged or the depth therein lowered to less than the standard depth ascertained in last certificate of survey, by reason of the abstraction of the waters of the River Vartry; and, if so, will he cause the Dublin Corporation to maintain such standard depth of water, or enforce the penalty provided as a debt due to the Harbour Commissioners of Wicklow.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W.): The matter is one for the Board of Trade, as the powers possessed by the Admiralty under the Act referred to by the hon. Member were transferred to the Board of Trade by the Harbours Transfer Act, 1862 (25 and 26 Victoria, Cap. 69).

Irish Industries at the St. Louis Exhibition.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the Irish Department of Agriculture will take steps to have a special exhibit of Irish industries at the St. Louis Exhibition.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): The Department understands that should it undertake the organisation of a special Irish Exhibit a pavilion for the purpose of such an exhibit would be provided from American sources. With the approval and co-operation of the Royal Commission, the Department is prepared to organise such an exhibit on the condition mentioned, and is at present in correspondence with the Royal Commission on the subject.

Belfast Floods.

MR. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Local Government Board for Ireland has been called to the effects of the periodical flooding in the city of Belfast; and whether, seeing that the flooding is due to the defective drainage scheme at present in operation, it is intended to hold a sworn inquiry into the causes and required remedies of the evil.

MR. WYNDHAM: The Board has been in correspondence with the Belfast Corporation in this matter. It has engaged the attention of the Works and Improvement Committees of the Corporation for some time past, but definite action has been deferred pending the appointment of a new city surveyor.

MR. MACVEAGH: Has the attention of the Local Government Board been drawn to the fact that these floods have gone on for many years while the vacancy in the City Surveyorship has existed for only a few weeks?

[No answer was returned.]

Ennis Police and Mr. Casey.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if he will explain why a Mr. Casey, a journalist, was removed from Court by the police at the last assizes in Ennis.

MR. WYNDHAM: Mr. Casey was not removed from Court. He attempted to force his way into the Court at a time when it was crowded to excess and the police told him there was no room.

Motor-Car Races in Ireland.

MR. TREVELYAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what precautions are being taken for the preservation of the life of the motorists and of the population during the forthcoming races in Ireland?

MR. WYNDHAM: An order has been made by the Local Government

Board, pursuant to the provisions of the Light Locomotives (Ireland) Act of this session, closing the course upon which the race will take place to all persons and traffic other than persons appointed by the Automobile Club as stewards, members of the constabulary and military on duty, locomotives engaged in the race, and persons in charge of the same. To give effect to this order a large force of police and military, supplemented by stewards supplied by the club, will be employed.

MR. SCOTT MONTAGU: Is it not the fact that the motor races in Ireland will be held under totally different circumstances from the Paris-Madrid race?

MR. WYNDHAM: Yes.

Belfast and Rathfriland Train Service.

MR. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Department of Agriculture has been called to the train service on the Great Northern Railway between Belfast and Rathfriland, and to the shunting appliances used, and the fares charged; whether they are aware that this journey of thirty-four miles occupies nearly three hours, and that passengers, cattle, and merchandise are conveyed by the same train, and that for the last three days of every week there is no train after 2 p.m.; and whether steps will be taken to compel the company to provide an efficient service at reasonable rates.

MR. WYNDHAM: The attention of the Department has not been directed to the matters mentioned. But if definite representations are made to it on the subject by aggrieved persons, inquiry will be instituted.

Irish Land Purchase Advances.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he can state the number and amount of advances applied for under the Land Purchase Acts and sanction to which was withheld by the Land Commission on the ground that the security was inadequate.

MR. WYNDHAM: The number of applications for advances under the Acts of 1885–1888 which were finally refused on the ground stated was 1,286; the amount applied for was £467,872. Fresh applications were subsequently made in respect of a number of these cases under the Acts of 1891–1896, but no separate record of these has been kept. The number of applications finally refused under the latter Acts is 789 for £175,154.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Do these figures include pending cases?

MR. WYNDHAM: No, Sir.

Questions.

MR. MANSFIELD: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury will he consider the advisability of having the answers to starred Questions printed and circulated with the Votes.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I do not think such a change would be desirable. Hon. Members already have the alternative of saying whether or not these Questions should be answered orally, and some difficulty might arise as to supplementary Questions if the suggestion were carried out. On the whole, I think the present system the best.

Military and Naval Works Bill.

MR. WEIR: On behalf of the hon. Member for East Perthshire, I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when the Military Works Bill and the Naval Works Bill will be introduced.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I hope these Bills will be ready shortly after we reassemble.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): Can the First Lord of the Treasury now say anything positive as to his arrangements for the business of the House?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: With reference to the adjournment for the Whitsun holiday, I believe the arrangement most convenient to the House will be that I move to-morrow that the House, at its rising at 7.30, do adjourn till Monday week, 8th June. That, at any rate, will be the substance of the Motion.

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.): Will Supply be taken on the Monday and Tuesday after we reassemble?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: On the Monday. On Tuesday we begin with the Second Reading of the Finance Bill.

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT: What Supply?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will put that question to me to-morrow. It is quite right the House should know before the holidays.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Will the right hon. Gentleman put down the 3rd Section of Vote 8 (Navy) to afford the Committee an opportunity of discussing the subsidies to merchant cruisers?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I will consider that; but one strong reason against it is that there is no chance whatever of the President of the Board of Trade being in his place on that date. On Tuesday I propose to begin the Second Reading of the Finance Bill.

Mr T. W. RUSSELL: When will the Irish Land Bill be taken?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: After the Finance Bill. It is my earnest desire to begin at once the consideration of the Irish Land Bill. That will be the next important business, and I shall desire to take that measure continuously for some considerable period. I propose to take, under the ten minutes rule, the Sugar Convention Bill to-morrow.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: I may point out that the subsidies I referred to are Admiralty subsidies.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Those to the Cunard and other companies.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING (LONDON) BILL [Lords].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 16th June, and to be printed. (Bill 223.)

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Fifth Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

MEDICAL ACT (1858) AMENDMENT BILL.

Order for Second Reading (8th June) read and discharged. Bill withdrawn.

MEDICAL ACT (1886) AMENDMENT BILL.

Order for Second Reading (8th June) read and discharged. Bill withdrawn.

NEW BILLS.

METROPOLITAN IMPROVEMENTS (FUNDS) BILL.

"To authorise the appropriation of the surplus Funds derived from Battersea Park towards the opening of the Mall into Charing Cross, and other Metropolitan Improvements," presented by Mr. Arthur Elliot; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. (Bill 224.)

PATENT OFFICE EXTENSION BILL.

"For the acquisition of land for the further Extension of the Patent Office, and for purposes connected therewith," presented by Mr. Arthur Elliot; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. (Bill 225.)

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY ACT (1882) AMENDMENT BILL.

"To amend the Married Women's Property Act of 1882," presented by Mr. Kimber; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. (Bill 226.)

TOWN COUNCILS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"To amend The Town Councils (Scotland) Act, 1900," presented by Mr. Asher; supported by Sir Robert Reid, Mr. Parker Smith, Colonel Denny, and Mr. Crombie; to be read a second time upon Friday, 26th June, and to be printed. (Bill 227.)

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Lords Message (19th May) relative to the Port of London Bill considered.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE. (Mr. BONAR LAW, Glasgow, Blackfriars) moved the committal of the Port of London Bill to a Select Committee of five members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection to be joined with a Committee of Lords.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe) expressed his regret at the absence of the President of the Board of Trade and the cause of it. This Committee, he pointed out, was to have a very important Bill referred to it, and he was glad it was to be a Joint Committee, because that, he believed, would facilitate the progress of the measure. He was pleased, also, that the nominations of members were to be made by the Committee of Selection. He was not a member of that Committee, but he looked on its nominations with great confidence. One advantage of that system of nomination was that it was entirely free from the usual machinery of a Party character. He held that Committees which dealt with such Bills as these should partake of a judicial rather than Party character. This particular Bill needed and would of course receive most earnest attention. He did not apprehend that the inquiry would be of a prolonged character, but this Bill did not stand on the same footing as an ordinary private Bill. It was introduced by the Government and it came before the House as embodying practically all the recommendations of the unanimous Report of the Royal Commission which sat on the subject. Its Second Reading was unanimously agreed to, and there was universal assent to the proposal that some new Port authority should be created. That was the backbone of the Bill. There was one point of procedure in connection with these joint Committees to which he would like to refer, and they had an illustration of it in connection with the Joint Committee on the Water Bill last year. There was a precedent—he did not think it was universal—that the Chairman should be a Member of the other House. There were instances to the contrary, and he was one of those who thought that the Chairman of the Joint Committee should be selected indifferently from whichever House he came, and that he should be the man most fitted to occupy the Chair. He was sorry to say that in the case of the Water Bill there was what he held to be a very grave irregularity, viz., the Chairman took upon himself to put a question in a way to secure a result known to himself beforehand. One could hardly contemplate such a thing being done by Mr. Speaker or the Chairman of Committees; as to put a question deliberately in the way to secure a certain result. He thought such conduct amounted to a very high kind of Parliamentary misdemeanour, and he hoped nothing of the kind would occur on this Joint Committee. He trusted too that the Committee would be able to report at an early date.

Ordered, That the Port of London Bill be committed to a Select Committee of five Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection to be joined with a Committee of Lords.

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

Ordered, That all Petitions against the Bill presented on or before the 11th day of June, 1903, be referred to the Committee; that the Petitioners praying to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, or Witnesses be heard against the Bill, and Counsel heard in support of the Bill.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the Quorum.—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*)

MUNICIPAL TRADING.

Lords Message (5th May), relating to the appointment of a Joint Committee on Municipal Trading, considered.

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somersetshire, Wellington) moved on the consideration of the Lords' Message of 5th May, relating to the appointment of a Joint Committee on Municipal Trading, that a Select Committee of seven Members be appointed to join with a Committee to be appointed by the Lords to consider and report as to the principles which should govern powers given by Bills and Provisional Orders to municipal and other local authorities for industrial enterprise within or without the area of their jurisdiction.

MR. WHITLEY (Halifax) inquired whether the selection had been made by the Committee of Selection or by some other means?

MR. SPEAKER: I think that question would properly arise on the names. It would then be competent to move to strike out the name of any hon. Member, and on that to give reasons.

MR. WHITLEY said he was not prepared to attack any names, but he wished to know what method had been adopted in the choosing of the Committee.

MR. SPEAKER: I cannot understand what the hon. Member's point is. If the hon. Member considers that some other method should have been followed, he would be in order in objecting to the first name, making objections to the general method of choosing the Committee.

MR. WHITLEY said that his objection was to the general complexion of the Committee. He wished to ask the Government to explain the method followed in the formation of the Committee. There were only two opponents of the Government upon it out of a total of seven Members; and, as hon. Gentlemen from Ireland had now to be considered as supporters of the Government, this fact affected the complexion of the Committee.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.) wished to say a word or two on the general aspect of this matter. He had not opposed, and did not propose to oppose, the appointment of the Committee, but he was bound to say that he distrusted the necessity for this Committee or the advantage likely to arise from its work; and he did not accept the specious arguments advanced in favour of its appointment. The object of the Motion was that the Committee should consider and report as to the principles which should govern the powers given by Bills and Provisional Orders to municipalities and other local authorities. The prospect, probably the intentional prospect, and the ultimate result would be the placing of some restriction on that municipal action which had taken place with such great advantage to the country. The word "govern" in the Motion almost implied restriction. That was not the way in which local government had grown up in this country. In the past communities had suggested a course of action, which had generally been embodied in Private Bills, and after it had been tested by experience it found its way into general Acts. Local government, dependent on local experience and knowledge, would become gradually better if it was placed under no restrictions whatever, because the very essence of local government was variety of experience. The question whether there should be any other limitations on local industrial enterprise or not obviously depended on the circumstances of the particular locality and upon the judgment of the local Council and ratepayers; also on whether private enterprise supplied the necessity or not. With regard to the constitution of this Committee, he must say he thought it most undesirable and inexpedient to submit to any tribunal which had no considerable experience or knowledge of local government a question of this kind, affecting the local government of the whole country. So far as he could see, not more than two of the members had any practical knowledge of municipal government.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Who are they?

MR. SPEAKER: It would be more convenient to discuss this on the names of members.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT said he intended to refrain from discussing names in any way. He only wished to point out that a Committee dealing with the important questions of local government should be in some of its elements specially qualified by knowledge and experience of local government. He did not think that the Report of a body constituted as this was would have the authority and respect paid to it which it ought to receive. He hoped, indeed, that his fears as to the effect of this inquiry would not be realised, for he would be very sorry that anything should be done to interfere with the development of local government. But they were entitled at that stage to guard themselves against any presumption that the Report when presented would be accepted. He thought the indications were rather to the contrary.

MR. HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somersetshire, E.) thought the advocates of municipal enterprise were somewhat over-nervous, and that these protests had been overdone. The Committee would not have to deal with the principle which should govern the powers, but with the principle which should govern the granting of powers—a very different thing indeed. Surely it was desirable to adopt some principle in that respect. Was it wise to give powers for municipal trading equally to all corporations, small or large? Large corporations, no doubt, could command a considerable amount of business talent, but small bodies naturally could not. The members of the Committee might be trusted to exercise common sense in the method of their inquiry. His experience on a similar Committee three years ago convinced him of the impartiality with which the Members of both Houses approached these great questions; and he was sure that if that Committee could have reported at the time, its report would have commanded the respect even of those who now sought, before the Committee was properly appointed, to detract from its influence and importance in a most unjustifiable manner.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said that for the first time Parliament was being asked to appoint a Committee to ascertain "principles." That was the duty of Parliament itself, and it could not be delegated to another body. In these circumstances the deliberations of the Committee must be useless, for it would be dictating to Parliament or to some other body whom it was powerless to coerce. The function of a Committee was to ascertain facts and to make practical recommendations. Parliament would certainly say—"We do not want your advice as to principles; that is our business. You look after the facts and practical recommendations; that is all we want you for." He agreed with his hon. friend behind him as to the want of grammar in the Resolution.

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD said he felt sorry that the grammar of the Resolution should be inaccurate, but he was not responsible, for he had adopted the words from a Resolution passed in 1890. The hon. Member for Halifax asked him as to the manner in which the Committee had been appointed. He consulted with the hon. Member for Leeds, and his suggestion was that the number should be five; and then the hon. Member for East Cork asked that a representative from Ireland should be on it. In 1900 the Committee consisted of three Members from the Government side and two Members of the Opposition—Ireland not being represented at all. Since that time municipal trading had very much increased in Ireland, and therefore Ireland should be represented on the Committee. The hon. Member for Leeds thought it would be very hard for the Liberal Party to be represented only by one Member, therefore the number of the Committee was fixed at seven — four from the Government Benches, two from the Liberal Party and one from the Irish Party. He thought that two out of seven was as fair a proportion as one out of five; or to put it the other way three out of seven was as fair a proportion as two out of five. He had done the best he could to please all parties in the House, and it was not his business to say whether the different representatives were good or bad.

MR. COGHILL (Stoke-upon-Trent) said they all thought it fair that a Member from Ireland should be on the Committee, but under the circumstances that Member should come from that side of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Gentleman is really discussing the next question to be put. The only way of dealing with that point is to move to strike out a name in order to put in another name.

Ordered, That a Select Committee of seven Members be appointed to join with a Committee to be appointed by the Lords to consider and report as to the principles which should govern powers given by Bills and Provisional Orders to municipal and other local authorities for industrial enterprise within or without the area of their jurisdiction.

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

Sir George Bartley, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Platt-Higgins, Mr. Powell-Williams, Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, and Sir James Woodhouse, nominated members of the Committee.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That three be the quorum.—(*Sir A. Acland-Hood.*)

EDUCATION (BORROWING) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Jeffreys (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

Clause 1.

*Mr. GARDNER (Berkshire, Wokingham) said that the object of the Amendment he desired to move was to make it easier for local authorities, who had a heavy burden cast upon them by the Education Act of last year, to bring that Act into working order. There was no disguising the fact that the financial conditions in connection with the bringing into operation of that Act were very unpopular and somewhat burdensome. The right hon. Member for Somersetshire had complained at the Second Reading of the Bill that to bring the Act into operation in his county would add 4d. in the £ to the rates. His county, might he say, was in the lap of luxury compared with the principal borough in his constituency. That borough had carried on its educational affairs for years in an excellent manner. It had never had other than voluntary schools, Roman Catholic, Wesleyan, Church of England, and British, and all the buildings, with one exception, were first-class. The inhabitants naturally asked why they should have been disturbed in their educational proceedings? The answer to that question was that they were being treated in the same manner as all other boroughs. It nevertheless seemed to them very hard indeed that this burden should be placed upon them. The financial year of all their schools ended on 31st March, and the result of the first year's working of the new Education Act was that they had not got a single sixpence of the block grant and only three-fourths of the fee grant; and, left without assistance, they would have to raise a rate of 9d. in the £ over the normal one to carry on the work. What they wanted was that the Government should do something to enable them to tide over the difficulty in the easiest way. The Bill before the Committee would only enable the Local Government Board to sanction a loan for a definite amount for a definite time; but the borough could do its work a great deal cheaper than that. In the early part of the year there were considerable funds in the hands of the education authority and they could get on well enough for four or five months. But as he understood the section of the Bill they must take up the loan—which in the case of the borough he referred to would amount to something approaching £3,000—at once and pay interest on it for the whole year. As hon. Members knew municipal authorities had various accounts and by arrangement with their bankers these were taken *en bloc*, and no charge for interest was made for an overdraft on one should others be in sufficient credit. In that case it was quite conceivable no interest might be charged to an education authority, and a saving might be effected in his borough of from £500 to £600 over the whole term of borrowing. His Amendment to the first clause of the Bill would, he believed, make the working of the Education Act as easy as possible in the circumstances, and he hoped it would be accepted by the Government on the grounds both of policy and justice. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 7, after '1902,' to insert the words 'or in such other manner as that Board may approve.'"—(*Mr. Gardner.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. WALTER LONG, Bristol, S.) said he could not help thinking that his hon. friend had moved his Amendment under a misapprehension. In the first, place he had stated on behalf of the local authority he represented, that they would be compelled to take up the whole of the loan at once and consequently would have to pay interest upon it, though they would not require all the money for immediate purposes. His hon. friend was in error. It would only be necessary for the local education authority to take up the loan in such proportion as they required the money for expenditure. If the estimate of the deficit in the borough referred to was £3,000 it would not be necessary for the authority to raise that sum all at once. They could make application as they thought fit for various parts of the loan as they needed them. This would avoid the difficulty to which his hon. friend referred. The other contention of his hon. friend was that the local authority, having various accounts at the bank, some of which were in credit, might be able to borrow the money from the bank without paying any interest on the overdraft. There was nothing to prevent that under the Bill as it stood. They were prepared to make the work of the local authority as easy as they could. He was ready to grant reasonable and fair terms and to consider applications for loans, but the cardinal principle was that of a distinct loan for a definite purpose under the ordinary law, and to adopt the principle of legalising overdrafts was a very unwise step to take. He hoped, therefore, that the Amendment would not be pressed.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S) said there was a very strong feeling among the boroughs with regard to this question, and as they had supported the principle of making the best of the Bill and the most of the Act, any representations coming from them were entitled to very great respect. The fact of having to make a rate was based upon very sound principles. Financially his hon. friend might say there could be no objection to it, but educationally it would be most prejudicial. It would create prejudice against the operation of the Act, and would have a tendency to alienate the sympathy and interest of the people of the locality in putting the Act into operation. The only effective remedy against borrowing would be the possibility of a surcharge. If a surcharge was the penalty the process of borrowing was open to objection on principle. He thought his right hon. friend rightly asked in this case, which was an exceptional one, that there should be elasticity given to avoid the necessity of laying a rate in the first instance. He thought there was ample protection in the Bill. Having regard to the prejudice which might arise against education owing to a temporary want of means, he thought that borrowing legitimately by a provision in this statute for a temporary purpose, would be amply justified. He supported the feeling expressed by the boroughs.

MR. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden) said that in his constituency there was a School Board which had a large balance in hand raised from the rates in an agricultural district, and naturally they very much objected to being rated by a precept when they already had a balance in hand. What redress had those ratepayers? He wished to know whether, in the event of this Amendment being carried, the borrowing powers could be limited to the area of the county.

MR. HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somersetshire, E.) said the School Board parish would get the benefit of any balance when the next rate came to be levied, parishes which had funds in hand would be dealt with by the County Councils. He had heard his right hon. friend's answer with some surprise. He understood from the answer given to the County Councils Association that the Government were willing to assist the County Councils in any reasonable way, and among those reasonable ways was that they might be permitted to overdraw their accounts. He could not see why the Local Government Board should throw any obstacle in the way, because his right hon. friend must remember that this position was created by the Government, and therefore they were entitled to all possible consideration, especially remembering the fact that they had to levy an extra rate in consequence. Surely it was not unreasonable that during the last few months of the last financial year they should be allowed to overdraw their accounts when necessary. Under the circumstances, it would be only reasonable for the Local Government Board to sanction this; otherwise they would be at the mercy of the auditors.

MR. BRIGG (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley) said he wished to impress upon the right hon. Gentleman the necessity of behaving as well as possible under the circumstances. The circumstances in one case he knew of were, that the County Council was called upon to raise £7,000 for extra expenses incurred under this Act. The County Council had done its best, but it now found itself face to face with the possibility of having to find the money immediately; it would only be reasonable, in granting a loan, that the right hon. Gentleman should do his very best to make the terms as easy as possible for the County Council to obtain the money. Of course they would have to borrow the money by degrees, and they should have as much time as possible given to them to make the payments easy. The money should be provided by the Government at once. He thought the right hon. Gentleman would act wisely if he would grant time, and give County Councils an opportunity of obtaining the money in the most reasonable way.

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University) pointed out that the necessity for raising these sums arose from the way the schools had been treated. Instead of finding them capital, the managers had had to find the money, and would not receive any assistance until the year was over; therefore they would have to wait for their money for a considerable time. The maxim of the right hon. Gentleman was a very sound one, and he agreed that the local authorities ought not to be encouraged to overdraw their banking accounts. This, however, was a very special case, and the local authority had no business to throw upon a subsequent year the cost of services rendered in the existing year. That was a reasonable principle, but in this case the expenditure was entirely unexpected, and it was not for the benefit of the ratepayers of the present year, but had to be spread over a number of years. Therefore, in a case of that kind, it seemed to him that the simple method of allowing the local authorities to overdraw their accounts would be quite sufficient means of enabling them to meet this unexpected and extraordinary expenditure, and he should be very glad if the President of the Local Government Board would consider the advisability of accepting the Amendment.

MR. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.) said it was most unwise to apply the strict rules of finance to matters of this kind. What the counties wanted was not so much a funded debt as a floating debt. But a floating debt was not the way to meet these emergencies. It ought not to be necessary for local authorities to have to take this course. The proper method of dealing with the matter would have been for the Government to have made a special grant to tide over these emergencies, and such a grant might easily have been made by the schools being given their grants at the commencement, instead of the end, of the year. Now a Government Department declined to concur with the local authority in a matter of local government, and at the same time they had neglected to do what they might have done with regard to this matter in the Act of 1902. One of the great acts of omission in that Act was the omission of the question of finance, and now the Government denied to the local authorities the privilege of having an overdraft without being surcharged. If he had regarded this matter from a purely partisan point of view he should not regret the position, because it would only tend to make the Government unpopular, but what he feared was that it would also tend to make the provision of the schools, and the schools themselves, unpopular. What they were applying for now was an aid to the Act of last year, a smoothing of the path, a slight, enabling action to make it possible for the Act and the schools to come more rapidly and smoothly into work than would otherwise be the case. He heartily supported the Amendment.

MR. HARDY (Kent, Ashford) asked the right hon. Gentleman to accept the advice which had been offered from both sides of the House, and give the local authorities the freedom they all desired. The difficulty in the way of getting this money to start the scheme would act prejudicially to the Bill in rural districts, because this process fell heaviest on the districts in which there were most non-provided schools. The process suggested by his hon. friend was a simpler one than that suggested in the Bill. He earnestly hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see his way to give way in this matter.

SIR E. DURNING-LAWRENCE (Cornwall, Truro) said the desire of the countryside was to make this Bill a great measure, and to make it work for the benefit of the children. He hoped nothing would be done by the Government to make that more difficult.

MR. WALTER LONG thought there must be some misunderstanding with regard to the matter. What was intended by the supporters of this Amendment was that there should be power in the local authority to contract a temporary loan for immediate and pressing purposes. In his reply to the Amendment he thought the object of the Amendment was to substitute a perpetual overdraft for the loan, which would be contrary to the principles of sound finance, and that being so he had intended to resist it. But if he now understood that the object of the Amendment was that there should merely be power in the local authority to meet a pressing necessity by means of a temporary overdraft he would withdraw his opposition.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs) said the discussion to-day illustrated the great danger of passing Bills without discussing them. The financial part of the Act of 1902 was never discussed, and this was the result. They were starting the local authorities with a great deficit, and that was not a proper thing to do. It was not fair to call upon these local authorities to borrow money and charge themselves with loans and interest and compel them to start with a large deficit when they ought to have started square. He thought the Government should consider the advisability of making some grant in this matter. To enable a local authority to overdraw at the bank was not good finance and might give rise to considerable difficulty. The present position was due to an oversight on the part of the Government, and under the circumstances it was not fair that the County Councils should be made to pay the penalty.

LORD EDMUND FITZMAURICE (Wiltshire, Cricklade) congratulated the Government on having accepted the Amendment in the interest of the County Councils. The operation of the Act was most unequal. The county he represented would get through their difficulties fairly easily owing to the Act having come into operation last October, and to their having already made some arrangements, but with regard to the neighbouring counties it was quite a different matter. The proposal before the Committee would do something to ease the difficulty. If the Councils were allowed to overdraw when necessity arose the difficulty would be largely got over. In principle it might be said to resemble giving the County Councils power to issue bills. Of late years Committees upstairs had been gradually introducing the system of allowing large boroughs to issue bills similar to Treasury bills in the place of the old practice of overdrawing their accounts, which was an objectionable practice to go on permanently. The power of temporarily overdrawing was really a somewhat unsatisfactory form of allowing the Councils to do for a limited period for a special purpose that which Parliament was gradually giving large boroughs the power to do, under certain safeguards, in regard to local government finance generally. That being so, he thought they ought to thank the right hon. Gentleman for accepting the Amendment.

Mr. HUMPHREYS-OWEN (Montgomeryshire) said that when the County Councils came to levy these extremely heavy rates they would make the Act very unpopular, hamper education, and aggravate the difficulties which already existed. In his own county the amount required would represent about 4s. in the £ as compared with an average county rate of 8d. He therefore hoped the President of the Local Government Board would be able even now to use his influence with the Chancellor of the Exchequer in this matter.

Mr. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye) joined in the appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to use his influence with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in order to obtain, if possible, a grant for this particular purpose. The facilities given by the Amendment would relieve certain County Councils to some extent, but, after all, the difficulty in which they were placed was not of their own making. It was important that they should begin with a working balance, and whether they obtained the money on loan account or by an overdraft on their bankers, they would have to pay interest. It was hardly fair that, for a reason which could not be laid at their door, they should be called upon to burden the ratepayers with that additional expense, and he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would come to their relief.

Sir CHARLES WELBY (Nottinghamshire, Newark) joined in reminding the Government of the existence of a very strong feeling in the country that they ought to have found money for the starting of the Act. At the instance of his constituents, who felt very strongly on this matter, he approached the Board of Education some weeks ago, and in reply he received a certain amount of genuine sympathy, but at the same time an intimation that, owing to the great financial embarrassments of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in connection with the Budget, it was impossible to find any more money this year. Of course he accepted the situation, and felt great sympathy with the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his difficulties, and did his best to quieten his constituents. The Committee would therefore understand his feelings when, only a few weeks afterwards, the Chancellor of the Exchequer informed them that he was so full of money that he was able, not only to take fourpence off the Income Tax, but also to remit the registration duty on corn. In connection with this he would like to suggest to His Majesty's Government, not only that the money ought to be found for the purpose of financing the Act, but also the source from which it might be derived. The suggestion he wished to make was that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should retain the duty on corn for a year and use the money for the purpose of giving the Act a fair start. Then in a year's time, if the Government were still in the same mind with regard to the tax, a contingency which could not be counted on with certainty, there would be plenty of time to remit the tax to obtain any electioneering benefit that might accrue from it. Seriously he pressed upon the Government the desirability of finding the money for the fair starting o the Act of last year, and of removing the great prejudice existing against it in consequence of the financial difficulty that had arisen.

Mr. ALFRED HUTTON (Yorkshire, W.R., Morley) said he had not much sympathy with the appeals that were being made. Hon. Members opposite last year demanded that the County Councils should undertake this work, and they ought now to be prepared to meet the liabilities thereby involved. It had been frankly stated that the main difficulty was caused by so many denominational schools having to be taken over. But the Associations of Voluntary Schools had about £250,000 in hand, and if their schools were to be taken over, why should not the balances be handed over with them? If that were done the difficulty would be entirely met.

Amendment agreed to.

The following Amendments stood in the name of the hon. Member for Morley:—"In page 1, line 9, after 'effect,' insert 'but such sums shall not be applied to the redemption of any debt contracted by the managers of the school."

"In page 1, line 9, after 'effect,' insert 'but such sums shall not be applied to the purposes of repairing any schoolhouse, and shall be used exclusively for the purposes of maintenance.'"

THE CHAIRMAN said the first of the above Amendments was out of order because it really supposed the local authorities might do things which they certainly could not do. The local education authorities were not responsible for debts contracted by managers, and could not apply money towards their payment. With regard to the second Amendment, the local authority had not to repair the schoolhouses; that was the duty of the managers.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE submitted that the Amendment was in order, as the local authorities were liable for wear and tear repairs.

THE CHAIRMAN: Perhaps the hon. Member will elucidate his Amendment.

MR. ALFRED HUTTON said that when he placed the Amendment on the Paper he really meant it to cover all repairs. But, as his hon. friend had pointed out, under the Act of 1902, there was a possibility of the county authority applying money for the wear and tear of the schools, many of which had not been kept up to a proper standard, and he thought the right hon. Gentleman might consent to introduce the words he suggested.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 9, after the word 'effect,' to insert the words 'but such sums shall not be applied to the purposes of repairing any schoolhouse, and shall be used exclusively for the purposes of maintenance.'"—(*Mr. Alfred Hutton.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

SIR JOHN GORST said that the local authority would not be able to spend the money in the manner suggested by the hon. Gentleman. The only wear and tear the local authority could spend money on was the wear and tear caused by their own use of the schools. It would be very inconvenient if the local authorities were not able to apply the money for a purpose for which they were legally responsible.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that this section was extremely vague. Was the interpretation of the right hon. Gentleman accepted by the Government?

MR. WALTER LONG: Certainly.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he would suggest instead of the words "to the purposes of repairing" the words "for the purpose of paying for such repairs in any school-house as may be effected or paid for by the local education authority." That would enable the local authority to pay for repairs for which they were legally responsible.

Proposed Amendment amended—

"By leaving out the words 'repairing any schoolhouse,' and inserting the words 'paying for such repairs in the schoolhouse as may be effected or paid for by the local education authority.'"—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

MR. WALTER LONG said that the interpretation of his right hon. friend was the interpretation which the Government placed on the Act of 1902. He hoped that the local authorities would not be hampered in what was undoubtedly a very difficult task. He had been appealed to to endeavour to induce the Chancellor of the Exchequer to help the local authorities in their difficulties; and now it was proposed to limit their powers. The only cost of wear and tear the local authorities would defray would be the wear and tear consequent upon their own occupation and use of the schools. He, therefore, submitted that, while the matter no doubt was not very serious, it would be undesirable to hamper the local authorities in the manner suggested. He hoped the Committee would not accept the Amendment.

Question put, "That those words as amended be there inserted."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 87; Noes, 151. (Division List No. 109.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (*Rhondda*)
Allen, Chas. P. (*Glouc., Stroud*
Asher, Alexander
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Austin, Sir John
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Bayley, Thomas (*Derbyshire*)
Bell, Richard
Black, Alexander William
Brigg, John
Bryce, Right Hon. James
Burt, Thomas
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Causton, Richard Knight
Channing, Francis Allston
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*
Cremer, William Randal
Crombie, John William
Dewar, John A. (*Inverness-sh.*)
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Duncan J. Hastings
Edwards, Frank
Ellis, John Edward
Evans, Sir F. H. (*Maidstone*)
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (*Leith*
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
Foster, Sir Walter (*Derby Co.*)
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert J.
Grant, Corrie
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Hayter, Rt. Hon. Sir Arthur D.
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemphill, Rt. Hon. Chas. H.
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Jacoby, James Alfred
Jones, David B. (*Swansea*)
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Kitson, Sir James
Labouchere, Henry
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (*Accrington*)
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, David
Lough, Thomas
M'Crae, George
Markham, Arthur Basil
Morgan, J. Lloyd (*Carmarthen*
Palmer, Sir Charles M. (*Durham*
Palmer, G. Wm. (*Reading*)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pease, J. A. (*Saffron Walden*)
Perks, Robert William
Price, Robert John
Rea, Russell
Reckitt, Harold James
Reid, Sir R. Threshie (*Dumfries*
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Stevenson, Francis S.
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, Abel (*Carmarthen, E*
Thomas, Sir A. (*Glam., E.*)
Thomson, F. W. (*York, W. R.*)
Toulmin, George
Walton, Joseph (*Barnsley*)
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, E. (*Clackmannan*)
Weir, James Galloway
White, George (*Norfolk*)
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whiteley, George (*York, W.R.*
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Woodhouse, Sir J T (*Huddersf'd*
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Mr. Alfred Hutton and
Mr. Goddard.

NOES.

Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Allhusen, Aug. Henry Eden
Allsopp, Hon. George
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arrol, Sir William
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Baird, John George Alexander
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Manch'r*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Bathurst, Hon. Allen Benj.
Bignold, Arthur
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Bowles, Col. H. F. (*Middlesex*)
Bowles, T. G. (*Lynn Regis*)
Brown, Sir Alx. H. (*Shropsh.*)
Butcher, John George
Carew, James Laurence
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cavendish, R. F. (*N. Lancs.*)
Cavendish, V C W (*Derbysh.*)
Cecil, Evelyn (*Aston Manor*)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (*Birm.*
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Chapman, Edward
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Colston, Chas. Edw H. Athole
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasg.*)
Cox, Irwin Edward Bainbridge
Cranborne, Lord
Crossley, Sir Savile
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Dickson, Charles Scott
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
Fergusson, Rt Hn Sir J. (*Manc'r*
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Fyler, John Arthur
Galloway, William Johnson
Gardner, Ernest
Garfit, William
Gibbs, Hn. A. G. H (*City of Lond.*
Gordon, Hn. J. E (*Elgin & Nairn*
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Greville, Hon. Ronald
Groves, James Grimble
Gunter, Sir Robert
Halsey, Rt. Hon. Thomas F.
Hamilton, Rt Hn Lord G (*Midd'x*
Hardy, Laurence (*Kent, Ashf'd*
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heaton, John Henniker
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hogg, Lindsay
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Hutton, John (*Yorks., N.R.*)
Jebb, Sir Richard Claverhouse
Jeffreys, Rt. Hn. Arthur Fred
Kenyon, Hon. Geo. T. (*Denbigh*)
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Kerr, John
Knowles, Lees
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (*Monm'th*)
Lawson, John Grant (*Yorks. N R*
Leamy, Edmund
Llewellyn, Evan Henry
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long, Col. Chas. W. (*Evesham*
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (*Bristol, S.*
Lowe, Francis William
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*)
Macdona, John Cumming
MacIver, David (*Liverpool*)
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Malcolm, Ian
Manners, Lord Cecil
Maxwell, W. J. H. (*Dumfriessh.*
Melville, Beresford Valentine
Mooney, John J.
More, Robt. Jasper (*Shropshire*
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*

Murray, Chas. J. (*Coventry*)
Nicol, Donald Ninian
O'Brien, Patrick (*Kilkenny*)
O'Kelly, J. (*Roscommon, N.*)
Palmer, Walter (*Salisbury*)
Parker, Sir Gilbert
Pemberton, John S. G.
Percy, Earl
Pierpoint, Robert
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Purvis, Robert
Pym, C. Guy
Rankin, Sir James
Rattigan, Sir William Henry
Redmond, William (*Clare*)
Renshaw, Sir Charles Bine
Ridley, Hon. M. W (*Stalybridge*
Ridley, S. Forde (*Bethnal Green*
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Samuel, Harry S. (*Limehouse*)
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Smith, Abel H. (*Hertford, East*
Smith, James Parker (*Lanarks.*
Strutt, Hon. Charles Hedley
Sullivan, Donal
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Tollemache, Henry James
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Tritton, Charles Ernest
Valentia, Viscount
Warde, Colonel C. E.
Welby, Sir Charles G. E. (*Notts*
Whiteley, H. (*Ashton-u.-Lyne*)
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Wilson, John (*Glasgow*)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (*Bath*
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Worsley-Taylor, Henry Wilson
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

Bill reported as amended, to be considered upon Monday, 8th June.

RAILWAYS (ELECTRICAL POWER) EXPENSES.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Motion made, "That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of the remuneration of any persons appointed by the Board of Trade for the purposes of any Act of the present session to facilitate the introduction and use of Electric Power on Railways, and any other expenses incurred by the Board of Trade in carrying such Act into effect."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*)

MR. WHITLEY (Halifax) said he did not know what this meant, and he objected to give a blank cheque of this nature to any Government Department. So far as he was aware there had been no explanation given to the House regarding this matter.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BONAR LAW (Glasgow, Blackfriars): May I interrupt the hon. Member; I think he is under a misapprehension. This is simply a necessary part of a Bill which has already passed the Second Reading. The Bill itself will come before the House in the ordinary way.

MR. WHITLEY thought the Minister in charge should get up and explain a Resolution when it was put forward. This was to authorise expenditure under a Bill which was in the future. Surely the Committee ought to have some estimate of the probable cost.

MR. BONAR LAW repeated that this was a necessary part of a Bill which had already passed the Second Reading.

MR. WHITLEY said he recollected that the Bill passed the Second Reading some weeks ago, almost without any attention being given to it. Could the hon. Gentleman state to the Committee what was the estimated cost of the working of the Bill to which the Resolution referred? It was only by getting figures to show what the cost of the Bill was expected to be that they would be able to check expenditure on the Estimates. If on the Estimates the Department was charged with extravagance, the hon. Gentleman would say that the Committee passed this Resolution authorising the expenditure of anything they liked.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said the hon. Gentleman who represented the Board of Trade had told the Committee that this was a formal matter. It was nothing of the kind. It was a Resolution authorising the Board of Trade to appoint any number of persons they liked. The clause in the Bill was as follows—

> "The Board of Trade may (with the concurrence of the Treasury as to number and remuneration) appoint or employ such persons as appear to them to be required for carrying this Act into effect, and the remuneration of such persons, and any other expenses of the Board of Trade under this Act shall be defrayed out of moneys provided by Parliament."

Consequently, what the Committee was called upon to do was to authorise the Board of Trade to appoint any number of persons they thought might be required, and to declare that the expenses should be paid out of money provided by Parliament. The Committee ought to have some information as to the amount of money involved. When the Bill was before the House for Second Reading they were told that the matter of expense could be discussed on the Committee stage, and now on the Committee stage they were told there was to be no consideration at all. His objection to the clause was that it enabled the Board of Trade to do what was tantamount to this—to appoint another whole army of inspectors to see that the alterations which the railway companies made, were done according to the notions of some person at the Board of Trade. It was an addition to the accursed army of inspectors which was treading under its heel the people of this country. He expected that we should have inspectors to see that we all went to bed at ten o'clock, and that we did not play bridge or cast lots. He thought the Government were not treating the Committee with proper respect when they did not even give an estimate of the amount they were going to spend under this Resolution. He hoped the Committee would insist upon a statement from the hon. Gentleman.

MR. BRIGG (Yorkshire, W. R., Keighley) said he had another grievance as to the nature of the work expected to be done.

*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is not entitled to discuss the Bill. This is purely a formal matter in order to enable the Committee to discuss this particular clause of the Bill. Supposing this Resolution were not accepted by the Committee, the Committee would not be able to discuss Clause 5 of the Bill. When that clause is reached, that will be the proper time to discuss the number of appointments proposed to be made, and the remuneration of the persons proposed to be appointed, and until this Resolution is passed the Committee is not entitled to consider that at all.

MR. BRIGG said his grievance was that the Bill was not made applicable to canal companies.

*THE CHAIRMAN: That has nothing to do with this Resolution whatever.

MR. CHANNING said he was a supporter of the Bill, but he thought the position the Committee was placed in by the Resolution was exceedingly unreasonable. He did not share the apprehensions of the hon. Member for King's Lynn with regard to the possibility of there being a large army of inspectors. He did not think they ought to authorise an unlimited expenditure. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade ought to inform the Committee what he thought was the probable amount of money which would be required under the Bill for the first year.

MR. BONAR LAW said that this was a purely formal stage of the Bill, and it was very unreasonable to ask for an estimate of the expense that would be involved. It was not absolutely necessary for the Board of Trade to take any steps. Their action would altogether depend on what was done by the Railway Companies; on the number of Railway Companies which availed themselves of the Act. If no Railway Company applied for the benefit of the Act there would be no expense, and even if one or two applied, he believed that the present staff of the Board of Trade would be quite sufficient to deal with the necessary work which would be thrown upon them by the Act.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT said that the restrictions and delays which occurred in the introduction of electric lighting into this country had led to most unfortunate consequences, and he certainly hoped they would not repeat the error in regard to the introduction of electric traction. We were very greatly behind the United States and our own colonies in the matter of electric traction, and the sooner we adopted it the better. That form of energy would be universally applied in a very few years and would be more economical than the present system of traction.

MR. WHITLEY said that he objected to any Resolution being passed in Committee of Ways and Means without having any explanation from the Minister in Charge. This procedure in Committee of Ways and Means was one of the few remaining protections which private Members had against the extravagance of the Government. However, from what the hon. Gentleman had said there was evidently no intention on the part of the Board of Trade to engage a large number of new inspectors without putting the expenditure on the Estimates, and with that assurance he was quite satisfied.

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of the remuneration of any persons appointed by the Board of Trade for the purposes of any Act of the present session to facilitate the introduction and use of electric power on railways, and any other expenses incurred by the Board of Trade in carrying such Act in effect.—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*)

Resolution to be reported upon Monday, 8th June.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (TRANSFER OF POWERS) BILL.

As amended (by the Standing Committee) considered.

Mr. HUMPHREYS-OWEN (Montgomery) said that in the absence of his hon. friend the Member for East Somerset he begged to move the omission of Sub-section 3 of Clause 1. This was a very valuable Bill in connection with local self-government, but he thought that the sub-section which he wished to see deleted was likely to cause very considerable difficulty in the administration of the Act. In fact he thought it would really render the Act nugatory. The relations between the minor and the superior local authorities were very frequently of a somewhat delicate character, and there was apt to be undue jealousy on the part of the minor local authorities at any increase of power being given to the County Councils. The sub-section provided that—

"Where the Local Government Board propose to make a Provisional Order under this section transferring any power, duty, or liability to the Council of the County or county borough, the Board shall give notice to all local authorities who, in the opinion of the Board, are likely to be affected by the transfer, and if within such time as the Board prescribes the majority of those authorities notify to the Board that they object to any such proposed transfer, the Order shall not be proceeded with so far as relates to that transfer, but without prejudice to the power of the Board to propose a new Order."

It seemed to him that where the Local Government Board and the County Council were agreed that the transference of any power was expedient it should not be in the power of the minor local authorities to obstruct it. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed to the Bill—

"In page 1, line 15, to leave out Sub-section (3) of Clause 1."—(*Mr. Humphreys-Owen.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill."

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT said he would point out to his hon. friend that all that the sub-section provided for was that there must be inquiry before the transfer of the powers, and that the minor authorities should have an opportunity of being heard for or against. It was perfectly well known that, in the past, there had been a great deal of friction between the minor and the superior local authorities, and also between them and the central authority. If an attempt was made by the superior local authority to co-operate with the central authority for the transfer of powers to the former without full inquiry, a blow would be struck at minor local government.

*__Mr. CHANNING__ expressed the strong hope that the Government would retain this sub-section. It was arrived at by a compromise in the Grand Committee. The Bill enabled powers of the great State Departments to be transferred by Provisional Order to a single County Council and thus affected the claims and interests of the urban councils, boroughs, and other minor authorities. He had himself considered whether some better Amendment could not be devised to secure their interests than the clause, but must confess that he had failed. The clause would prevent any serious hardships and tend to eliminate friction between the County Council and the minor authorities.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said that everyone who had studied this question must know that there was a real difficulty. It was all very well to talk about the minor local authorities, but that there was friction between the County Councils and the non-County Boroughs was perfectly well known, and it seemed to him that the sub-section was the only way out of the difficulty, unless hon. Members were prepared to coerce the minor local authorities into arrangements with the superior local authorities.

LORD EDMUND FITZMAURICE (Wiltshire, Cricklade) said he entirely agreed with the hon. Member for East Northampton, when he said that this sub-section was not only a compromise but the only possible compromise. What were the facts? They had to find a *modus vivendi* between the Borough Councils and the County Councils. They could not succeed by trying to override the powerful section of opinion represented by the Boroughs and the Urban Councils. For twelve or thirteen years one attempt after another had been made by the County Councils Association and the Municipal Councils Association, and by successive Governments to find some means of decentralisation; but they had always failed. The County Councils had not yet entirely obtained the confidence of the boroughs. Great efforts had been made in late years by the two great associations representing the County Councils and the municipal boroughs to find a *modus vivendi*; and he was very hopeful that if the Bill passed it would be the beginning of a better state of things. If, however, the County Councils tried to override the minor authorities, they could not possibly make a greater mistake in their own interests. He did not believe that the sub-section which it was proposed to omit would reduce the Bill to a nullity. As chairman of the Standing Committee on Law, he presided over the discussions on the Bill in Committee. An attempt was made to introduce the Parish Councils; but that was going a great deal too far. If they had been introduced, he quite admitted the Bill would not be worth passing. What the Bill proposed was, that where there was a decentralising order affecting a Board of Guardians, or an Urban Council, the majority in each case would have to be consulted. Public opinion was growing in those matters. In his own county, they sometimes got over difficulties by convening a representative meeting of all the minor authorities, in such matters as valuation, for instance; and he found that the minor authorities could be got to accept things in that way much better than if it were sought to force them. The Bill got in the thin end of the wedge; and that wedge would gradually extend, not, however, by compulsion, but by the mutual consent of the two great classes of public opinion which the Bill affected.

MR. WALTER LONG said that there was practical agreement in all quarters of the House with reference to the Bill. The hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment of his right hon. friend the Member for East Somerset said that the Amendments put into the Bill upstairs would entirely destroy its effect. He entirely disagreed with the hon. Gentleman He believed that the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken did not in the least exaggerate the effect of the Amendment. Without the sub-section he did not think it would be possible to pass the Bill; and even if, by some fortuitous circumstance, it was passed without that sub-section, it would be impossible to give it effect against the will of the bodies whom the hon. Gentlemen called the minor authorities. The origin of the Bill was a demand made by some of the representatives of Wales that there should be a transfer made of some of those powers. It was pointed out that such a transfer could not be made under the existing law, as at present a transfer could only be general and not particular. The main object of the Bill was to enable a transfer to be made in particular cases. The case presented by Wales was that not only was the transfer desirable, but that there was no opposition among the county boroughs or urban districts. Therefore, the whole foundation of the Bill was not only the desire for a transfer, but the particular unanimity of the local authorities concerned. They could do no more evil turn to the County Councils than to put on them the administration of some of the duties of a Government Department against the conviction and desire of the other local authorities. He was, therefore, glad that the Motion of the hon. Gentleman, which would amount to the rejection of the measure, had found such little favour in the House.

*Mr. HELME (Lancashire, Lancaster) said he cordially supported the position which the Government had been pleased to take up to try and meet the feelings expressed on behalf of the local authorities whose position this Bill proposed to alter. When the Local Government Bill came before the House in 1888 the fear was expressed on behalf of many of the urban districts that too great powers were being given to the County Councils, and it was decided in the general interest that the Local Government Board should only have power to make a general transfer, not to transfer in particular cases. The very foundation upon which local government in the country had been developed had been on the basis of consent; and he thought the arrangements which were now before them in this Bill and in the Amendments he had put on the Paper in Committee which the Government were pleased to accept, met the desires of those concerned. There was no doubt whatever that in many cases the Local Government Board should have the power of transferring certain powers; and he thought that by the arrangements contained in the Bill justice would be done to the cases where between the County Council and the smaller districts there was a desire to have those powers transferred, and at the same time protect those where there might be a feeling of hesitancy as to the granting of those powers. On behalf of the non-county boroughs and urban districts he thanked the Government for the spirit they had shown in accepting the Amendments which were proposed in Committee.

Mr. EDWARDS (Radnor) said he desired to associate himself with the remarks of the hon. Member who had just spoken. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board referred to the part which the Welsh Members had taken in bringing this matter before the House. The right hon. Gentleman thought that, if it was desirable that those powers should be transferred, they should be transferred by a Government Bill. It did not, however, much matter who introduced the Bill as long as the powers were transferred. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman who, although he opposed his Bill, because it was a private Member's Bill, showed that he was sincere in the matter by bringing forward this Bill. He was glad to find that the difficulties which stood in the way of the Bill for many years had at last been overcome. When the President of the Local Government Board in 1899 tried to pass a Bill of this kind, he was met by the opposition of the Borough Councils. In his opinion, the omission of the subsection would destroy the Bill altogether; and he would appeal to his hon. friend to accept the sense of the House, especially as the Bill went through Committee practically unanimously. The position might not be ideal; but it was a distinct advance.

Mr. COURTENAY WARNER (Staffordshire, Lichfield) said he also wished to appeal to his hon. friend to withdraw the Amendment, as there was a great feeling throughout the country, especially on the part of the boroughs and the rural authorities, that those powers should not be rushed upon them without their consent.

Mr. J. H. LEWIS (Flint Boroughs) said he also wished to say how cordially he appreciated the action of the right hon. Gentleman in bringing forward the Bill; and he congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on a very useful measure. He hoped his hon. friend would withdraw his Amendment.

Mr. BRIGG said he was glad to see that the compromise which had been arrived at in the Grand Committee appeared to be satisfactory to all concerned.

Mr. HUMPHREYS-OWEN said that after the appeals which had been addressed to him, especially the appeal of his hon. friend the Member for Radnor, who was the parent of the Bill, he would ask leave to withdraw the Amendment. The hon. Member for South Islington seemed a little troubled at his having referred to "minor local authorities;" but he had not the least idea of saying anything disparaging. He only borrowed a convenient phrase, used by the Government.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. WALTER LONG said he hoped the House would consent to the Third Reading.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

SUPPLY [21st May, Evening Sitting].

Resolution reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

Class III.

"That a sum, not exceeding £375,897, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the expenses of the prisons in England, Wales, and the Colonies."

Mr. WHITLEY (Halifax) called attention to the fact that when this Vote was in Committee he had asked a question as to the large increase of £25,000, but had received no answer owing probably to the fact that the hour was late when the right hon. Gentleman replied, and this point was overlooked. He wished now to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he could not see his way to economise in this Department when the Vote next came before the House.

Mr. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) explained that the number of convictions in England had enormously increased owing to the practice of legislation making petty offences punishable by fine or imprisonment. In England, as in Scotland, the people frequently preferred to go to prison rather than pay the fine, and that necessitated greatly increased prison accommodation.

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Cochrane, Ayrshire, N.) said that serious crime, happily, continued to decrease. The increase in the number of prisoners arose almost entirely from the large increase in the number of petty offences in the last two or three years. The increase in the Estimate was to provide for a further estimated increase. In addition to that there was the increased cost of the new prison dietary which the House had sanctioned.

Mr. WHITLEY: Does that account for the increase in the number of the petty offences?

*Mr. COCHRANE declined to express an opinion on such a wide question as to whether persons might or might not prefer the diet of the prison to that of the workhouse.

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [22nd April].

Resolution reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES 1903-4.

Class II.

"That a sum, not exceeding £139,395, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Office of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade and Subordinate Departments, including a Grant in Aid."

Resolution read a second time.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) moved that the consideration of the said Resolution might be postponed. His reason for making this Motion was that in consequence of the most regrettable accident to the President of the Board of Trade, which no one deplored more than he, the questions he desired to raise could not be properly raised. He would just call attention to the fact that the Prime Minister had informed the Committee that out of this Vote he proposed to take certain moneys and allocate them to the purposes of the Convention at Brussels. That was one reason for postponing the consideration of this Resolution. Besides that, he had serious complaints to make with regard to the Department of the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the Returns in connection with shipping which had been promised again and again and never supplied, and with regard to the question of shipping subsidies. These were very important matters, and under the circumstances he thought he was justified in moving the postponement.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.) hoped his hon. friend would accede to the Motion, which seemed a most reasonable one. The appropriation of these funds for the purpose of the Sugar Convention, which many of them opposed, was a conclusive reason for postponing it.

MR. CALDWELL said there were special reasons for the postponement of the Resolution. When dealing with a great Department the Resolution was always held over from time to time in case of matters cropping up. On the night this Vote was taken it was taken on the distinct understanding that the Report should be put off for some time, because there were other matters to be taken on Report.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (MR. BONAR LAW, Glasgow, Blackfriars) said he was prepared to accede to the request of hon. Members. He merely desired to say that where there were two officers in charge of a Department one should be ready to answer any questions which might be put. Had such questions been addressed to him he would have done his best to answer them, but he had no objection to postpone this Report.

Further consideration of Resolution postponed till Monday, 8th June.

SUPPLY [21ST APRIL, AFTERNOON SITTING] REPORT.

Order read, for further consideration of Twelfth Resolution, "That a sum, not exceeding £48,288, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Board of Agriculture, and for Kew Botanic and Pleasure Gardens, including certain Grants in Aid."

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [14TH MAY, AFTERNOON SITTING].

Resolution reported.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

Section 1. "That a sum, not exceeding £2,991,800, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expenses of the Personnel for Shipbuilding, Repairs, Maintenance, &c., including the cost of Establishments of Dockyards and Naval Yards at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [14TH MAY, EVENING SITTING].

Resolution reported.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

Section 2. "That a sum not exceeding £4,786,700, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of the Matériel for Shipbuilding, Repairs, Maintenance, &c., including the cost of Establishments of Dockyards and Naval Yards at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March. 1904."

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said he desired to move the recommittal of the Resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Has the hon. Member any precedent for proposing the recommittal of a Resolution of Committee of Supply?

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said he had fortified himself by referring to the Journals of the House. On 10th Aug., 1880, a Resolution was recommitted to Committee of Supply, and there were good precedents both for recommittal and for postponement. He hoped the Civil Lord to the Admiralty would be able to give satisfactory reasons why recommittal should not take place, but the ground on which he moved was that the Vote was not so fully discussed as a Vote of such importance, and involving so large a sum of money, should be. He wished also to remind the House that it had power to recommit even a Resolution, and he therefore moved.

Motion made, and Question proposed. "That the Resolution be re-committed to Committee of Supply."

Mr. SPEAKER: Of course I have not had an opportunity of considering the precedent to which the hon. Member refers, nor was I aware there was any such case. Subject to that, however, I will put the Question.

Mr. PRETYMAN (Suffolk, Woodbridge) said his hon. friend had not given any reason why the Resolution should be recommitted.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: That of inadequate discussion.

Mr. PRETYMAN said that was a very general statement. The Vote might be a large one, but the whole of the sitting was devoted to its discussion. The Secretary to the Admiralty answered every point raised in the debate, as far as he could judge, to the general satisfaction of the Committee. In the absence of any specific complaint he was afraid that was all he could say.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES asked leave to withdraw the Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Resolution agreed to.

Supply [21st May, Afternoon Sitting].

Resolutions Reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

Class III.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £180,118, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for such of the Salaries and Expenses of the Supreme Court of Judicature as are not charged on the Consolidated Fund."

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £28,144, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Office of the Land Registry."

3. "That a sum, not exceeding £25,000, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Salaries and Expenses connected with the County Courts.'

4. "That a sum, not exceeding £26,390, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Salaries of the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police, and of the Receiver for the Metropolitan Police District, the Pay and Expenses of Officers of Metropolitan Police employed on special duties, and the Salaries and Expenses of the Inspectors of Constabulary."

Resolutions agreed to.

PUBLIC OFFICES (DUBLIN) (ADVANCES).

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. Lowther (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it is expedient to authorise the issue out of the Consolidated Fund of such sums, not exceeding in the whole £225,000, as may be required for the purposes of any Act of the present session for the acquisition of certain land in Dublin, and for the erection and equipment of a Royal College of Science and other buildings for the public service, and to authorise the Treasury for the purpose of providing for the issue and repayment of such sums to borrow money by means of Terminable Annuities for a period not exceeding thirty years, such annuities to be paid out of moneys to be provided by Parliament for the Service of the Commissioners, and if those moneys are insufficient, out of the Consolidated Fund."—(*Mr. Arthur Elliot.*)

Mr. BOLAND (Kerry, S.) regretted that, owing to the unexpected way in which this matter had come on, the great body of Irish Members were not present to take part in the discussion, especially the Dublin Members, who were particularly interested in this question. As regarded the Bill itself, which had for its object the provision of a site for the new College of Science, he, of course, desired to support it, but he wished to take that opportunity of calling attention to the way in which the site was to be allocated. The Bill which was introduced last year was not carried, as it raised considerable opposition on the ground that certain Government offices were to be transferred. On this occasion he was anxious to raise the question whether the Government would not provide in connection with the present Bill that a portion of the new site should be allotted to a modern Gallery of Art.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that it would not be in order for the hon. Member to go into that point. The Bill itself was not now before the Committee. What they were discussing was the formal financial Resolution to give the Bill effect.

Mr. BOLAND wished to know whether there would be any later opportunity of discussing this matter.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Elliot) was doubtful whether he would be in order in going into the details of the Bill on this Resolution, but thought there would be ample opportunity of discussing details when this Bill got into Committee. He was perfectly aware of what the hon. Member had at heart, and assured him that only after the most careful consideration had the Treasury been forced to decide that they could not meet his views.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Perthshire, E.) held that it would be in order, and in accordance with precedent, that the Minister in charge of the Resolution should explain the purpose for which this money was being asked. That course was frequently followed when they were discussing Resolutions on which Bills were founded.

*The CHAIRMAN said that was so. But he had stopped the hon. Member who was addressing the Committee because he was suggesting that the money should be spent on some other scheme than that involved. That was not permissible on this Resolution, which was simply to give effect to one specific purpose.

Mr. BUCHANAN said this money would be borrowed and repaid by terminable annuities, extending over thirty years, and he wished to protest against the growing practice of constructing public works of this sort, out of borrowed money rather than out of sums placed on the annual Estimates. That was a wrong principle so far as Parliamentary control was concerned, and it was a wrong system of finance. Hitherto that method had been adopted only in cases where the work would be of very great magnitude, and he thought the Committee were entitled to some explanation of why it had been adopted on the present occasion, where such a comparatively small sum was involved.

Mr. MOONEY (Dublin County, S.) said that in the debate of last year the then Secretary to the Treasury made certain statements as to what was to be done. He wished to know if the undertakings then given were to be departed from. At that time it was stated that certain buildings were to be occupied by the Irish Local Government Board, and he wished to know if that arrangement had been altered.

*The CHAIRMAN: That is hardly relevant to this question, which is a strictly financial Resolution.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) said it was not unreasonable to ask the present Secretary to the Treasury to give the Irish Members an opportunity of obtaining the fullest information in regard to this matter. If the Secretary to the

Treasury would refer to the debate of the 28th of May last year he would find several long statements on the subject made by the then Secretary to the Treasury, and if the hon. Gentleman read those statements he would understand the point which had been raised by his hon. friend. He thought some undertaking ought to be given to look into this matter, because the point raised by the hon. Member for Kerry was one which ought to be carefully inquired into.

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland) asked if it would be in order when they came to the Committee stage to make this money payable out of taxation instead of borrowed money.

Mr. ELLIOT said the Bill had now reached that stage at which it was largely in the hands of the Hybrid Committee, and he did not see why the questions which had been raised should not be threshed out before that Committee.

Mr. BUCHANAN said that the Hybrid Committee could not alter the method by which this loan was to be raised. If this was the one opportunity when the House of Commons could express its opinion as to the way this money was to be raised, surely they were entitled to take this occasion in order to obtain an explanation from the Secretary to the Treasury. So far as he was aware there was no precedent for a work of this comparatively small magnitude being constructed by means of borrowed money instead of out of the annual Votes of the year. He begged to move that this sum be paid out of the annual Vote.

*The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept that Motion because it rests with the Minister to decide in what way the money shall be raised and the Committee cannot alter that. The Committee can of course refuse the proposal, but it cannot extend it.

Mr. BUCHANAN: My proposal would not extend it, but would simply alter it.

Sir JOHN GORST (Cambridge University) said this was not the first time they had discussed this question in Committee of the House of Commons. Earlier in the session the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that this plan of borrowing money for the purpose of constructing work was only used in cases of large and important work and that all small and minor works were to be paid for in the usual constitutional manner. They could not call this £250,000 a very large sum. Therefore, according to the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, this building ought to be paid for by the annual Vote of Parliament. He thought they ought to ask the Secretary to the Treasury to explain why the general principle laid down by the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been departed from.

Mr. ELLIOT said that it was quite true that this money had been raised by terminable annuities, but the Vote for these annuities would appear in the yearly Estimate, and hon. Members would be able to discuss these questions when those items came before the Committee. The system which they were adopting was the usual one.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND asked if it was not a fact that money had been borrowed for similar objects in exactly the same way for buildings in this country. He remembered not long ago that a considerable sum was raised in this way for public offices in London. The amount under discussion was relatively a small one, but it was a very important matter to Ireland, and he was utterly astonished to find objections being raised to obtaining this comparatively small sum for public offices in Ireland. Not long ago several millions, to which Ireland contributed, were expended upon colossal buildings in London, which not one Irishman in 10,000 would ever see, and now, when a small sum was asked for to erect public offices in Ireland, this petty quibble was raised as to the way the money should be found. He hoped this small sum would be granted in a graceful way. If there was any bones made about it, the people of Ireland would say they had had to drag this money out of the House of Commons. He hoped the Secretary to the Treasury would pay particular attention to the points which had been raised.

MR. BOLAND asked whether, on the Motion for Adjournment to-morrow, he would be able to raise this matter again with a view to getting a further expression of opinion from the Secretary to the Treasury.

*THE CHAIRMAN: I should not like to give any ruling upon what will be in order on the Motion for Adjournment, when Mr. Speaker will be in the Chair.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL said that by bringing foward this Resolution at the present time the Government were setting a precedent which might have serious consequences. It was not expected that this large financial question would come forward to-day. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was not in his place, and right hon. Gentlemen on that side of the House who held strong views on the matter were not there. He would venture to suggest to the Secretary to the Treasury that it was reasonable that this Resolution should be postponed until a later occasion when it could be more fully debated.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I am prepared to debate it as long as ever you like now.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said it was difficult to understand the position taken up by hon. Gentlemen opposite. They denied that the principle which the Government applied to the erection of public offices in London should be applied in Dublin. Their only reason was that in one case the sum was two millions, while the other meant a quarter of a million. So far as principle was concerned, there was no principle to stand upon at all. The Treasury had decided on raising the money in this way, and why should hon. Gentlemen object? He agreed with the hon. Member for East Clare that it was taking all the grace out of it. The Committee had plenty of time to spare to-night, and he hoped they would not adjourn the discussion. He remembered that the Bill was lost last year by tactics of hon. Gentlemen opposite. He hoped that the same tactics would not wreck the Bill this year.

SIR GEORGE BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said that the method proposed in the Bill was obviously the right way of dealing with this matter. It might be a small thing, £250,000, but how could they possibly arrange for the Treasury getting that in annual sums? They would by adopting that means be upsetting rules just as much as if they got the amount in a Bill like this. It was very much better to do as was done in the case of the South Kensington Museum, and get the whole sum in this way than get it on haphazard Votes of the House. If they had not done this for large buildings there would have been a temptation to stop building operations during the expenditure consequent upon the war. In carrying out these large works it was very much better that the money should be voted as a whole at once. It was the cheapest, most business-like and common-sense way, and it was the way that any person in private life would adopt in dealing with such a matter.

MR. TOULMIN (Lancashire, Bury) said he should like to join in the protest against the principle of borrowing money for such works as these. He did not desire that the Resolution should be postponed, or that they should stand in the way of these buildings being erected in Dublin. He did think, however, that it was well that the Committee should take note of the way in which this principle of borrowing was being extended. He could not admit that they had adopted the principle of borrowing money in this way. He thought it would be very much better to pay for the work out of Revenue. They did not pay for Post Offices in England by borrowing money. They paid a certain amount every year. Practically the passing of the Resolution would commit the House to the expenditure, and he thought it was a bad principle that these smaller sums should be borrowed. He was not sure but that they were being committed to more extravagant schemes than they might sometimes think wise to enter into, when they adopted for these smaller sums the principle of borrowing which should be reserved for larger sums.

MR. ELLIOT said he could only refer the Committee to a case in 1894, when £200,000 was raised by means of annuities to provide additional land for the British Museum. There was nothing new being done by what was now proposed in connection with the College of Science and the new public offices in Dublin.

Mr. BUCHANAN said he accepted the precedent quoted by the hon. Gentleman as corresponding to a certain extent to what was now proposed, but still he maintained that this method of procedure was not that which had usually been followed in the past. The National Gallery for Ireland, which cost something like £80,000, was built entirely out of annual Votes. At present there was an annual Vote for the extension of the National Gallery, and hitherto, when the Government was going to undertake works of a character similar to this new College, he ventured to say that it had been the almost invariable practice to put a sum down annually on the Estimates to be voted by the House. It was their duty to protest against the continual extension of what the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarded as an evil practice which was growing up, of increasing the public debt by borrowing for works similar to these.

Resolved: That it is expedient to authorise the issue, out of the Consolidated Fund, of such sums, not exceeding in the whole £225,000, as may be required for the purposes of any Act of the present session for the acquisition of certain land in Dublin, and for the erection and equipment of a Royal College of Science and other buildings for the public service, and to authorise the Treasury for the purpose of providing for the issue and repayment of such sums to borrow money by means of Terminable Annuities for a period not exceeding thirty years, such annuities to be paid out of moneys to be provided by Parliament for the service of the Commissioners, and if those moneys are insufficient out of the Consolidated Fund.

Resolution to be reported upon Monday, 8th June.

MARINE STORE DEALERS (IRELAND) BILL.

[Second Reading.]

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.), in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, said the object was to extend to Ireland a few sections of the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act of 1892 for the purpose of putting marine dealers under certain restrictions. It was found recently in Ireland, especially in Dublin, that the number of petty larcenies was largely on the increase, and not only were they committed by professional thieves, but, it was much to be regretted, by children of tender years who were seduced from the paths of honesty and probity into crime, by the facilities afforded by the receivers of stolen goods. The object of the Bill was simply to put these marine dealers—brokers, as they were called in Scotland—under restrictions, so that they should keep a book in which should be entered the name of any person who brought goods for sale, and the description of the goods; that they should keep the goods for fourteen days; that they should not deface them; and that they also should keep a record of the name of the purchaser to whom they might afterwards dispose of them, and to give facilities to the police for the inspection of those books. This would not interfere with the honest dealer, but it would enable the police to detect crime.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Wednesday, 10th June.

ROYAL COMMISSIONS AND SELECT COMMITTEES (COST).

Return ordered, "Showing the annual cost to the country of Royal Commissions and Select Committees, respectively, appointed since the year 1892."—(*Mr. Malcolm.*)

And, there being no further business set down for the Afternoon Sitting, Mr. Speaker left the Chair till this Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

HOUSE OF LORDS (VETO)

*Mr. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) said that from time to time various proposals had been made in the House of Commons for the reform or the abolition of the House of Lords. Some of the Motions were said by those who opposed them to be either undesirable, indefinite, or impracticable. The Motion he moved to-night was not, however, open to the charge of vagueness or ambiguity, and he hoped to show that it was not only desirable but practicable. This was a burning question amongst the people, who had made up their minds that until the problem of the House of Lords was disposed of there could be very little useful and progressive legislation in this country. He did not now propose to discuss the question of whether there should be one or two Chambers, but he was perfectly certain that if this country only possessed one Chamber and it was proposed to establish a second, in which the sole qualification for a seat should be that the occupier should be the eldest son of his father, and that he and other eldest sons should possess the power of perpetual veto, that the proposer of such a scheme would be speedily incarcerated in an asylum for idiots. But that principle was unfortunately embodied in the British Constitution. We had not yet reached the stage when we had hereditary tinkers, tailors, or shoemakers; but in our Constitution hereditary lawmakers had the power to meddle, muddle, and destroy useful legislation passed by the House which derived its authority from the ballot-box. Postmen, policemen, porters, and domestic servants had to produce some evidence of character for their positions, but no such qualification of capability or character was needed for the House of Lords. The Members of the House of Lords were all presumed to be honourable and able men, and born lawmakers. It was idle to disguise the fact that this evil existed, and his desire was to make the best use of the House of Lords and to bring it into harmony with modern requirements. This was the object of his Resolution. For some time past he had been in correspondence with Members of the various Parliaments of Europe and America, and had endeavoured to find out whether any other Chamber in Europe was based on the same system as the House of Lords, and this was the result of his enquiries. The Upper House of Austria was composed of princes, nobles with proper qualifications and some hereditary rights, some ecclesiastics, and life members nominated by the Emperor. Their power of veto was perpetual, but in case of a conflict a conference was arranged between the two Houses and the matter generally settled. That of Belgium was composed partly of men elected by the general body of electors under a method of proportional representation. The power of veto was continuous, but had only been exercised three times since Belgium had become a kingdom. In Denmark twelve life Members were appointed by the Crown, and fifty-four Members were indirectly elected by the people every eight years. Their power of veto was also continuous. In the case of nearly every Parliament of Europe he found there was an elective element in the constitution of the Upper House. In France the Senate is elected by district bodies and delegates for nine years, one-third retiring every three years. The power of veto is continuous, but both Chambers being elected they manage to settle their differences without any serious conflict. In Germany the fifty-eight Members of the Upper Chamber of the German Empire are appointed by the Government of each individual State, so that they derive their power indirectly from the people. In Hungary there is an elective element, and also in Holland. In Italy, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland, more or less of the elective principle prevails. In the United States of America the Senate was an elected body, every State in the Union having power to appoint two Senators. In the case of a conflict there, both Congress and the Senate appoint three Members as a Committee, the general result being a compromise. The most interesting of the illustrations that he wished to give to the House was that of the little kingdom of Norway, which had solved the question of one or two Chambers in a most intelligent manner and democratic spirit. In Norway there was one suffrage, every man over twenty-five years of age being entitled to a vote. Every three years they elect 114 men to constitute their Parliament. One-fourth of this assembly is formed into a sort of Select Committee, and is generally composed of the most able and experienced men. Both these bodies had their President and officers, and were practically separate from each other for the time being, The power of veto was a limited one. In case of a conflict a joint sitting of the two Chambers was held and a two-thirds majority of the whole settles the matter. That was to him the most interesting information he had been able to gather, because the Parliament of Norway being elected on a democratic basis the question had been solved by that little State in the most satisfactory and democratic manner.

The organisation of the legislative bodies to which he had referred showed that not in the whole world was there to be found any Chamber based exclusively on the hereditary principle where the power of veto was perpetual. It might be said that in practice the system in this country of which he complained worked very well. Such a theory was entirely upset by the black catalogue of offences committed by the House of Lords in opposing useful and beneficial legislation passed by the House of Commons. He would give only two instances, which might be multiplied indefinitely. The House of Commons had thirteen times, by large majorities, passed the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, and thirteen times the House of Lords had defied the expressed will of the House of Commons by rejecting that Bill. Again, the House of Commons had twice passed the very useful little measure known as the Friendly Societies (Outdoor Relief) Bill. The House of Lords had twice rejected that Bill, the second time on Friday last. So that the House of Lords not merely defied the House of Commons, but it also defied the great friendly societies of the country, with upwards of a million of members, who were practically unanimous in demanding that the Bill should be passed into law. What did the House of Lords know about friendly societies? He did not suppose there was a member of that Chamber who had any practical acquaintance with the subject. Not one of them had ever been an Oddfellow, a Druid, or a Shepherd, or a member of any of these great organisations. If there were no other reason than that the House of Commons had been so repeatedly flouted by this hereditary Chamber, and that useful legislation had been unceremoniously thrown out by the House of Lords, that would be quite sufficient to justify him in making every effort in his power to reform that institution in the way indicated by his Resolution. There were, however, some weak-kneed people who said: "Yes, it is all very well to preach these doctrines; we are at one with you in admitting the evil that exists; but we fail to find a remedy. It is no use to talk of a thing being desirable if it is not possible. It is no use to pass resolutions which are simply pious expressions of opinion." Those who reasoned in this fashion forgot that the House of Commons held the purse-strings of the nation, and if the House of Lords, supposing this or a similar resolution was passed, were to defy the House of Commons, the House of Commons must decline, as he believed it would decline some time or other, to vote the Supply necessary for the continuance of the House of Lords. Every year the House of Commons votes a large sum for salaries and expense of offices in the House of Lords, and if the House of Commons declined to provide the £42,000 which it voted last year, then their Lordships would have to pay their own expenses and the salaries of their officers, some of which were very fat. They would have to pay the cost of maintaining their own Chamber and its various offices, to furnish their own apartments, to pay their own domestics and chambermaids. Such a thing as a bachelor-librarian having eight bedrooms at his disposal would not happen again. He believed that people out-of-doors were heartily in support of the proposal which had been made to limit the vetoing power of the House of Lords. In proof of that, he cited the thirteen Labour Members in the House of Commons who had some right to speak, not only on behalf of the people whom they represented, but also on behalf of the great masses of their fellow-countrymen. Every one of these thirteen Labour Members was cordially in support of this proposal. Formerly monarchs in this country possessed omnipotent power, and there was constant friction between the Crown and the people, but our forefathers gradually deprived the monarchs of a great portion of the power they possessed; they took the sting out of the crown, and the result had been the constitutional monarchy under which we exist, and which appears to harmonise with the popular will. That was exactly what he wanted to do with the House of Lords; to deprive it of some of the power it possessed, and which he, and those who thought with him, believed it ought not to possess. They wanted to take the sting out of the Upper Chamber and bring it up to date, by limiting the power of their Lordships' veto, which ultimately would have to be done. It was with that object he had brought forward his Motion, and having slung his little pebble at the great giant he would conclude by moving the Resolution.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said they ought to thank the hon. Member for the very valuable account he had given of the different foreign Chambers, and their functions. If it were desirable to have a second Chamber, of which he had doubts, he would select as a model out of the list given by his hon. friend, the Norwegian. In Norway the first House was elected by the people, and it sent their most eminent men up to the other Chamber, where they had a good deal to say, but very little to do. That would be a very good thing here. They could perfectly well afford to send the two Front Benches up to the House of Lords, where they could talk matters amongst themselves, while the Commons did the business of the nation. His hon. friend had asked him to second his Motion, which he gladly agreed to do, although suffering from a severe cold. He had at various times moved Resolutions of this character in diverse Parliaments. In 1894, when a fresh Liberal Ministry had been formed, he moved an Amendment to the Address very much of the character of his hon. friend's Motion. Who opposed him? Why, it was the Liberal Administration. He was shocked to find them going into the Lobby against him, together with the Members from the Benches opposite. But he had not long to wait for vengeance, for from that moment they muddled, and muddled, and muddled, and ploughed the sands of the seashore until they went to the country and lost their election, as he believed, simply because they did not support his Motion. He did not want to treat this matter in a mere academic way. He believed that Liberals generally did not want to do so; but, whether academic or not, it was a question of vital importance to the Liberal Party. Under our party system, a Party at a General Election obtained the majority, and a Minister was born from that majority. That Ministry remained in power until it lost the confidence of the country. But the Upper House was formed by hereditary legislators, of bishops and peers recruited from gentlemen who, in most cases, paid the Party to which they belonged very large sums of money for being made peers, and obtaining for themselves and their descendants the right to legislate for the people. From the very nature of the hereditary principle they were bound to have a permanent Conservative majority in the House of Lords. He did not mean Conservative in its true sense, but in its party sense.

They were told that the business of the House of Lords was to check hasty and impulsive legislation when a Government chose to legislate on a matter of very great importance before the country had been consulted upon it. But, when the Conservative Party were in office, the House of Lords was absolutely non-existent. It was a wretched echo of the dicta of this House. How was the present House of Commons elected? It was elected by the present Ministry and their supporters going to the country and asking the country to return them to Parliament, irrespective of all domestic questions, simply and solely to enable them to finish up a war which, from some want of logic, had not been already finished. The House of Lords did not say to the Government, "The war is not over; we will pass none of your measures." But they would have done so in the opposite case had the Liberals been returned to power. [Cries of "No."] Well, take the case of the Education Act of last year. Did the Government ever consult the country on that matter? They knew perfectly well they did not.

The Government calmly, and on their own initiative, proceeded to upset the whole educational system of the country to their own advantage. Did the House of Lords throw out that Bill because the country had not been consulted? But suppose the Liberals, without consulting the country, had put forward a Bill providing what he regarded as a sound educational system—that was to say, which swept away all sectarian schools entirely—would not the House of Lords have thrown it out? Most unquestionably they would. Take the Home Rule Bill. He had heard hon. Gentlemen opposite say what a valuable institution the House of Lords was, because it stepped in and prevented Home Rule for Ireland. It must be remembered that in the election that brought together the Parliament that passed that very Home Rule Bill of Mr. Gladstone's, the question was put to the country, and the election turned on Home Rule or no Home Rule. The House of Lords could not say that the country had not been consulted, because they knew perfectly well that it had. Yet they threw out the Home Rule Bill. Mr. Gladstone wanted to dissolve at once and appeal to the country. [An HON. MEMBER on the GOVERNMENT Benches: "But you did not do it."] He would have done it anyhow, and he might reasonably say if that had been done it was the opinion of most Gentlemen on that side of the House Home Rule would have been carried. But what happened? There were certain Gentlemen who lagged superfluous on the stage and stuck to office without power, and when at last they went to the country they did so without once alluding to the House of Lords, and they were beaten. He was not sorry that they were beaten, and he hoped that it would be a lesson to them for the future.

He was credibly informed that at some place called Epsom there had been that day a race between three-year-olds, each carrying the same weight; but in the struggle between the two Parties in the State the Liberals were handicapped in the game. They were not treated in the same fair way as the horses. He believed the favourite had won, but if the favourite had had to carry doubleweight, it would probably not have won. If the Liberals were sent to the country with their legs bandaged they went at a great disadvantage. They made promises; perhaps they believed in these promises, and when they carried these promises into the Bill which the Lords threw out they were dumb. Therefore, the country said, "Much as we dislike King Stork, we prefer him to King Log." He himself was entirely in favour of the abolition of the House of Lords; he would abolish it root and branch. He objected to hereditary legislators. He objected to the archbishops and bishops of one particular sect legislating for him; and he objected to all those brewers and bankers, and Heaven knew what, who were sent to the House of Lords simply because they had large money bags. The constitution of the House of Lords was utterly unfitted for the present age. There was not one country in the world which was prepared to accept an Upper Chamber formed in the same way and with the same powers as the House of Lords. He was glad to know that all the Labour Members, with one single exception, had issued a whip for this Resolution, and that one Labour Member did not join in the whip because he took a stronger view of the matter, and was in favour of the abolition of the House of Lords altogether. He alluded to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Merthyr Tydvil. He regarded the Resolution before the House as one of the most moderate proposals ever made by a moderate man. It did not ask for the abolition of the House of Lords; it dealt simply with the difficulties of the present situation; it proposed merely to clip the wings and pare the claws of the House of Lords. It had been suggested by certain Liberals that it would be desirable to restrict the veto not from one session to another, but from one Parliament to another. He remembered that he had the privilege of speaking to Mr. Gladstone on that matter. Mr. Gladstone said to him—

> "You have brought forward many Resolutions, but remember this: never agree to any restriction which allows a veto to be carried on from one Parliament to another, because it would be absolutely impossible for a Liberal Ministry to live under such a *régime*."

He thought Mr. Gladstone was perfectly right, and that anybody who really thought the matter out would agree. For what would happen if the veto was from one Parliament to another? A Liberal Ministry would pass a Bill. The Lords, who would be much more free in using their veto than at present, would throw the measure out. Next session another measure would be treated in the same way. What would the Liberal Ministry be able to do? Either one of two things: to sit down and grin and bear it, or to dissolve. It would be impracticable to force a dissolution almost every year, and they would have to sit down and bear it, and enjoy the emoluments of office; but the constituencies would not quite approve of that. They would say, " We sent you to Parliament with a majority to do something; but if you humbly accept the decision of the House of Lords, we come to the conclusion that it is not worth while exerting ourselves at the next General Election." And when that election came off the Liberal Ministry would be turned out. He thought there would be time enough for consideration if the veto were from session to session. He did not suppose anyone would take the little part of finishing a session one day, and beginning another session the next day. He meant the ordinary session the next day. The Resolution of his hon. friend really represented the irreducible Radical minimum. It ought to be the corner-stone of Radical policy. The country ought to know at the next General Election that if the Liberals were returned to power this force would be swept away once and for all.

In the reign of Queen Anne a sufficient number of Peers were created by one Government to swamp the majority of the other Party in the House of Lords. That could be done again; there would not be the slightest difficulty in the matter. As a matter of fact it was quite sufficient to threaten the Lords, who would then absent themselves from their House, as they did on the occasion of the great Reform Bill, and allow any measure to pass. He trusted all Liberals would, as he was perfectly certain all Radicals would, show the country that they were really in earnest in this matter by voting for the Motion of his hon. friend. In the last speech made by Mr. Gladstone in this House he said that matters had arrived at such a point that, unless the power of the Lords to veto was restricted it would be absolutely impossible for any Liberal leader to remain in office. This Resolution really represented the Radical minimum. It ought to be the corner-stone of Radical policy. The settlement of this matter was a legacy left to the Liberal Party by Mr. Gladstone, who was the greatest member and Statesman of the present times, and the best way of honouring his memory was to show respect for the advice which he had given. He seconded the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the power now possessed by the House of Lords to veto any measure adopted by the House of Commons should be limited to one session of Parliament."—(*Mr. Cremer.*)

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said he had not had the good fortune to hear the whole of the speech of the hon. Member who had introduced the Motion, and therefore did not know whether the hon. Member had founded his argument on the fact that the Motion was necessary in the interests of the country; but he had had the good fortune to hear the whole of the speech of the hon. Member who seconded the Motion, and that hon. Member based his argument in support of this Motion not on the fact that it was necessary in the interests of the country but on the fact that it was necessary in the interests of the Liberal Party. The hon. Member for Northampton would excuse him if he did not share the views the hon. Member apparently held, that the interests of the nation and the interests of the Liberal Party were the same. Where a Motion was brought forward to change the whole constitution of the country, he submitted the question to consider was not the interest of a particular Party but the interests of the nation as a whole. The hon. Member, with his usual candour, by making so much of the Liberal Party gave his case away, because, when alluding to the last speech Mr. Gladstone ever made in the House, he seemed to forget that by that speech Mr. Gladstone failed to carry the majority of the country with him. The hon. Member could hardly expect, therefore, that the majority of the nation would cut their own throats to do something the whole aim and object of which was to restore to power a Party in which they had no confidence. The hon. Member who moved the Motion gave a long account of different forms of government in foreign countries; but he could found no argument upon that unless he could prove that the countries with these various constitutions were better governed than our own, and their people more prosperous and more happy. The hon. Member who seconded the Motion was now absent, like the thirteen Labour Members, but in the speech he had delivered he spoke of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill of 1892 as having been demanded by the people, but surely the hon. Member's recollection was at fault. There was the greatest anxiety to know what the Home Rule proposal of 1892 would be, and finally it was found that it did not differ very much from the previous Bill of 1886. The action of the House of Lords in rejecting the Bill was approved by the nation at large. The only way in which the question could be determined whether a measure was desired by the nation was to take an election on the issue; and in the case of the Home Rule Bill the Liberal Administration knew it would be useless to do that. The present Motion was absurd, or else it meant the practical abolition of the House of Lords as a legislative assembly. If that was the intention, then it should be boldly stated, and reasons given for it which, so far, had not been given. He hoped the House would reject a Motion which would make so great a change in the constitution of the country.

*MR. DUKE (Plymouth) thought that in bringing forward this Motion the hon. Member had a little misread the signs of the times. There had been Motions of a similar character before which had greatly moved the feelings of the House, when the Leaders of both Parties debated the subject as if it were a branch of practical politics. He congratulated the House and the country upon the present appearance of the Front Ministerial Bench, and also of the Front Opposition Bench. Both of them were empty, which he regarded as a sure indication that no one having any responsibility for public affairs at the present time cared twopence about this Motion. It was a Motion which aimed at the existence of the House of Lords, because it would reduce the House of Lords to a position of mere futility and public uselessness. The House of Lords in its conflicts with the House of Commons in dealing with great public questions had not always had the worst of the contest. In the periods between 1880 and 1890 there were two conflicts between the Liberal Administration and the House of Lords, and in neither of those conflicts did the Liberal Administration succeed in converting the country to their views and carrying the country with them against the decision of the House of Lords. He believed that, with all its anomalies and alleged impediments to usefulness, if the hon. Member cared to test the opinion of the people he would find that in reality they were proud of the House of Lords with all its faults. The object of the Motion of the hon. Member and of this attack upon the House of Lords, as was said by the hon. Member for Northampton, was to enable hon. Members opposite to "do the business" of the Kingdom and "do the business" of the Empire. There was a fatal significance about the words, and the majority of the House, and in all probability the people in the country, were of opinion that if put in the position hon. Members opposite would certainly "do the business" of the Kingdom and the Empire. Until hon. Members opposite were prepared to establish a second Chamber more powerful than the House of Lords, he did not believe they would succeed in leading any considerable body of public opinion to a course by which the veto of the House of Lords would be limited to the startling extent proposed by the Resolution, which he characterised as a bald and revolutionary proposal. The hon. Member had referred to the cases of Canada and the Commonwealth of Australia. He could only say that in the case of Canada the example of this country had been followed as nearly as possible, while as to Australia, where there was one of the most democratic peoples in the whole civilised world, the Constitution recently adopted for the Australian Commonwealth was in itself one of the strongest condemnations of the present proposal.

MR. CAWLEY (Lancashire, Prestwich) believed that those Liberals who put the abolition of the House of Lords in the very forefront of their programme in 1895 were the most successful. He had the fortune to win a seat from the other side on that occasion, and that was what he did. The House of Lords was composed of five or six hundred persons about the same as any other similar number of individuals picked from any crowd, and neither better nor worse. He failed to see, therefore, why the House of Commons should have its measures vetoed time after time by those six hundred Gentlemen picked indiscriminately from the general public. The hon. Member for Plymouth might be a cleverer man than he was. He quite admitted it—but that was no reason why the hon. Member's son might not be a bigger fool than his son. He had no animosity against the House of Lords as Peers, and no objection to their having their titles and their estates. He objected to them in politics as being a landlord body. The British Parliament as a whole had been ever dominated by the landed interest, and he objected to that, as he would object to any one industry or interest in the country dominating legislation. Heheld that the veto of the House of Lords should be limited to one session at most.

Mr. PURVIS (Peterborough) was bound to confess that he found few additional ideas advanced in support of the attack on the House of Lords since 1899. When the mover of the Motion expressed a desire to pare down the power of the other House and reduce it to one exercise of the veto, he was perfectly candid, for he admitted he would like to get rid of the veto altogether. He did not, however, seem to appreciate that the function of the House of Lords was to stand up for the will of the people. Yes, to maintain the Constitutional principle that, when the will of a majority in the House of Commons is opposed to the will of the people, the latter shall prevail. No assembly having to deal with great affairs ought to be without some check on its action; and the House of Lords imposed a check on spasmodic action by the Commons. It had done that over and over again, and the House of Commons had repented its hasty action. The Long Parliament, having got rid of the House of Lords, determined to make itself permanent, and so roused the indignation of the people that Cromwell had the support of the nation when he turned that House of Commons out, locking the doors and putting the key into his pocket. It was the want of any check on the proceedings of the French Assembly that caused some of the most sanguinary episodes in the Revolution. The House of Lords was not an unpopular institution. Direful threats were made against the other House if it dared to reject the Home Rule Bill; but when the House of Lords did reject it, it was not upon the Conservative but on the Radical Party that the stroke of popular vengeance fell in 1895. He hoped that the House by a comparatively large majority would reject the Motion.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.) said the hon. Members for Plymouth and Peterborough both appeared to have completely misunderstood the object of the proposal. The speech of the latter had been directed not so much in support of the House of Lords as it at present existed, as to a definition of what a Second Chamber should be. The Second Chamber of the Australian Commonwealth had been quoted in defence of the House of Lords. As a fact, there was no more democratic Assembly in the world. It was quite typical of the working-classes of Australia. He supported this Motion because he saw in it the germ of what he desired. By reducing the House of Lords to a position of futility, it would lead to the uprooting of the hereditary principle. The hon. Member for Peckham said the Unionist Party could not support the Motion as by so doing they would be cutting their own throats.

Sir FREDRICK BANBURY: I did not say it would be cutting our own throats; I pointed out that the hon. Member for Northampton had declared that the carrying of the Motion would be the salvation of the Liberal Party, and I did not see why we should cut our own throats in order to put the Liberal Party in power.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE admitted that the intellect of the hon. Member was more subtle than his own, but he failed to see that he had inaccurately quoted the sense of his observation. There was under this Resolution the deep underlying purpose which the Liberal Party had supported ever since it took its present shape, and he for one frankly admitted that he supported it because he felt that if they were to be enabled to pass the measures which the country desired, they must get rid of the House of Lords as at present constituted. As to the hereditary principle, would any hon. Member opposite claim that he had a right to go to his own constituency and recommend that his own son should succeed him as Member, simply because he was his son. Such an idea as that was altogether out of date at the present moment. He was really unable to take the arguments of the hon. Member opposite seriously. Underlying this Resolution was a purpose which the Liberal Party had consistently supported ever since it took its present shape. ["What shape?"] He had been in political life for some time, but until two days ago he had never known a Government completely to change a proposal three times in three consecutive days, or one that was sometimes kept in office by its nominal opponents, and sometimes deserted by its nominal supporters. He thought, therefore, the Liberal Party was at any rate as coherent a political unit as the Party opposite. [At this moment the Colonial Secretary entered the House.] The right hon. Gentleman could not have entered the House at a more interesting period, as the House would be glad to hear some repetition of those doctrines which were not out of favour with the right hon. Gentleman some ten or fifteen years ago. The right hon. Gentleman might have changed his opinions, and could doubtless give adequate reasons for having done so, but the words he addressed to the English people on this subject ten or fifteen years ago would be an important factor in deciding the question when it came definitely before the country.

SIR ELLIOTT LEES (Birkenhead) said that he could remember the time when this question was one of the principal planks of the Liberal Party, and he was therefore amazed to see the Front Opposition Bench so deserted. The hon. Member for the Prestwich Division had attacked the House of Lords on three grounds: first, that one Lord was the son of another; secondly, that the Lords were largely interested in the land; and, thirdly, that if the Liberal Party had been in office last year the other House would have rejected the Education Bill. He was pleased to hear the hon. Member admit that that would have been enough to condemn the House of Lords in the eyes of the country.

MR. CAWLEY said his contention was that if a measure had been sent up by the Liberal Party with as little popular support as the Education Bill had at its back, the House of Lords would have thrown it out as a party question.

SIR ELLIOTT LEES said it remained to be seen what would be done with any future Education Bill sent up by a Liberal House of Commons. The question they had to consider was whether the House of Lords rejected Bills that were for the benefit of the country. The hereditary principle had been objected to. Probably if a Second Chamber were now being appointed, a Committee representing the nation would be formed to select from the foremost men of the country persons fitted to be members of such a Chamber. But the Cabinet of the day might be said to represent the nation, and frequently, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, as the head of the Cabinet, persons who had been eminently successful in various walks of life were made Members of the House of Lords. There were in the Upper House many Members who sat there not because they were the sons of their fathers, but because they had done such service to the State as to entitle them to sit in the Second Chamber. A large majority of the Members so appointed voted against the Home Rule Bill, and a fair majority of them voted against the Employers' Liability Bill.

No doubt, if they were now to form a Second Chamber, they would not proceed on the hereditary principle; but he contended that the House of Lords understood the feeling of the country and, on the whole, worked very well. There was something to be said in favour of a device similar to the *referendum*. That, however, raised a great constitutional question which required much consideration.

Failing that, he saw nothing but a Second Chamber to save the country from ill-considered and revolutionary legislation.

MR. OSMOND WILLIAMS (Merionethshire) said he would go farther than the Resolution—he would do away with the House of Lords altogether, and start *de novo* with a representative Chamber. Why should they submit to have a Tory Committee always ready to throw out Bills passed by a Liberal Government? As an Assembly, the House of Lords was a blot on our Constitution. What was its record? In 1832 it brought the country to the brink of civil war over the rotten boroughs; in 1880 it plunged Ireland into crime because it refused compensation for disturbances. Then for many years it kept Nonconformists out of the Universities. Who were these men that they should dictate terms to our Statesmen, and encompass the ruin of our Constitution? Were the Members of the House of Commons so lost to their pride of race and their love of popular institutions as to allow this Tory Committee to flout and jibe the representatives of the nation? The House of Commons was not perfect, but at any rate it was bone of the national bone, and flesh of the national flesh; it came from the people, and periodically it went back to the people for a renewal of life and energy, whereas these Lords sat on for ever, watching the poor and the working classes struggling for a better, brighter, and nobler life, knowing all the while they had the power and the will to thwart them. If the House of Commons was not to be down-trodden and flouted in the future as it had been in the past, it was time to put an end to this irresponsible Assembly, and he hoped the Resolution of his hon. friend would be carried.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. ELLIOT, Durham) said he should like to ask the hon. Member whether they lived under a representative form of Government, because he noticed that the proposer and seconder of the Resolution warned the House that outside this was a burning question, and if the House of Commons was a representative body, surely it ought to reflect in someway the conflagration that was said to be raging outside. They were also told that the Resolution they were now discussing was the corner-stone of the Liberal Party. [Mr. Labouchere: It ought to be.] He was tempted to believe from the state of the House, with most of their Members outside it, that very few took the slightest interest in the subject. This was not the first time the question had come before the House. Nothing whatever came of a previous Resolution carried under Lord Rosebery's Government; and he asked whether the discussion of such Resolutions, to which not the slightest importance was attached, and which indeed were a mere worthless *brutum fulmen* when used by one House against another, was consistent with the self-respect of the House of Commons. He had been struck by the weakness of the case made out under present circumstances against the House of Lords. How could the hon. Member have the face to accuse the House of Lords of obstructive and obscurantist views in rejecting the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill when every Member knew that the Bill would now be law if it were not for the House of Commons itself, which enabled a small minority to trample on the will of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and the generally settled convictions of the British people? ["No."] Those were, at all events, his sentiments. He ventured to submit that the House of Lords was equally subject, though not so directly, to the same power as the House of Commons, and bowed, as the House of Commons constitutionally bowed, to that power—he meant the settled and constitutionally expressed conviction of the country. He did not think the House of Lords ought to yield to the passing feeling of the hour if it had strong views of its own in a contrary direction; but if it had to do with the settled conviction of the country, made known year after year in the constitutional fashion, the House of Lords of these days knew, perhaps better than the House of Lords in past years, that its duty was to recognise and bow to that conviction. Those who withstood such convictions, whether in the one House or the other, were, in his opinion, guilty of an offence against the Parliamentary and constitutional spirit which had enabled our somewhat complex system to work through so many generations as well as it had done.

The hon. Member had referred to every country in Europe and other countries. He did not think it necessary to go into the systems of other countries, or the history of past times, or even the methods of the colonies. They had to deal with the system that suited themselves. Theirs was not like the Parliaments of Portugal and Belgium and those great Parliaments which had sprung up in their own colonies in close imitation of their own. Starting afresh to sketch out a Constitution, they might individually prepare different systems; but they knew the system under which they worked, and they knew that it did work. He objected to the language of the hon. Member when he spoke of the veto of the House of Lords. It was not constitutionally accurate. The House of Lords did not exercise a veto. The constitutional view was that the two Houses must concur in every act of legislation. There was no question of one House vetoing the proposals of the other. The hon. Member talked as if this country had since 1832, and anterior to that, been legislatively at a standstill; whereas almost year after year, and certainly every four or five years, very large measures of fundamental reform had been passed. Every one of these measures had been passed by the House of Lords as well as by the House of Commons. How could it be said, then, that the House of Lords pursued a policy of bar? The House of Lords acted, as every second Chamber must act, rather as a checking instrument than as a vetoing power. The House of Lords had long ceased to try to thwart the settled convictions of the British people. There had been nothing of that sort in recent years, because the House of Lords had to a large extent essentially modified its character and so had the House of Commons. They had made up their minds no longer to rely on mere privilege. No doubt Lord Lyndhurst would have mutilated every measure which the Reformers of 1832 sent up to the House of Lords, but Lord Lyndhurst and the party of privilege did not get their way, and why? Because Lord Lyndhurst did not lead the Conservative Party, and because a far wiser, more long-sighted Statesman, Sir Robert Peel, led the Party, and almost for the first time induced it to become a progressive Party. The House of Lords now judged measures on their merits instead of rejecting from the point of view of mere privilege, Bills sent up from the popular House. He did not think his hon. friends had made out a strong case for this Motion. Hon. Gentlemen opposite had not brought down their friends to support this corner-stone of Liberal politics. They were not present. The working men were conspicuous by their absence. This was a proposal not only inconsistent with the dignity of the House of Commons to accept, but it was fundamentally wrong in itself. No doubt it might be possible to make many changes in the constitution of the House of Lords; but, at the same time, it was very desirable, while there were two Houses, as he thought there ought to be, that the one House should be independent of the other. Each must bow down to the solid will, the deliberate sense, of the British people. They did not want one House to be the mere echo of, or subject to, the other. But they could not be equal in authority. This House was the main instrument under our Constitution for governing this country. He asked the House to reject the Motion by a large majority.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 62; Noes, 118. (Division List No. 110.)

AYES

Abraham, William (*Rhondda*)
Allen, Charles P. (*Glouc. Stroud*
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Bayley, Thomas (*Derbyshire*)
Black, Alexander William
Brigg, John
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burt, Thomas
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Causton, Richard Knight
Cawley, Frederick
Channing, Francis Allston
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*
Cullinan, J.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Edwards, Frank
Foster, Sir Walter (*Derby Co.*
Gladstone, Rt. Hn Herbert John
Grant, Corrie
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Harmsworth, R. Leicester
Harwood, George
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Charles Seale-
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (*Bristol, E.*
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Jacoby, James Alfred
Jones, William (*Carnarvonsh.*)
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (*Cornwall*)
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (*Accrington*)
Lloyd-George, David
Lough, Thomas
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
M'Crae, George
M'Killop, W. (*Sligo, North*)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Morgan, J. Lloyd (*Carmarthen*

Moulton, John Fletcher
Nolan, Joseph (*Louth, South*)
O'Brien, Patrick (*Kilkenny*)
Paulton, James Mellor
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, John Bryn (*Eifion*)
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Robson, William Snowdon
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Schwann, Charles E.
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, Sir A. (*Glam., E.*)
Thomas, David Alfred (*Merthyr*
Thomas, J. A. (*Glam., Gower*)
Thomson, F. W. (*York, W.R.*)
Toulmin, George
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, E. (*Clackmannan*)
Weir, James Galloway
White, George (*Norfolk*)
Williams, O. (*Merioneth*)

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Cremer and Mr. Labouchere.

NOES.

Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Baird, John George Alexander
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Manch'r*
Balfour, Kenneth R. (*Christch.*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bignold, Arthur
Bond, Edward
Bull, William James
Butcher, John George
Cavendish, V. C. W. (*Derbysh.*
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (*Birm.*
Chamberlain, Rt Hn. J. A (*Worc*
Chapman, Edward
Charrington, Spencer
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Colomb, Sir John Charles Ready
Cook, Sir Frederick Lucas
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cranborne, Lord
Crossley, Rt. Hon. Sir Savile
Cust, Henry John C.
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Denny, Colonel
Dickson, Charles Scott
Dimsdale, Rt. Hon. Sir Jos. C.
Dorington, Rt. Hon. Sir J. E.
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Fellowes, Hon Ailwyn Edward
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fison, Frederick William
FitzGerald, Sir Robert Penrose
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Fyler, John Arthur
Galloway, William Johnson
Godson, Sir Augustus Frederick
Gordon, Hn J E (*Elgin and N'rn*
Gordon, Maj Evans (*T'r Haml'ts*
Greene, Sir E. W. (*Bury St. Ed.*
Groves, James Grimble
Gunter, Sir Robert
Guthrie, Walter Murray
Hamilton, Rt Hn Lord G (*Midd'x*
Hamilton, Marq of (*L'nd'nderry*
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
Johnstone, Heywood
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir John H.
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Kerr, John
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*)
Lees, Sir Elliott (*Birkenhead*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Llewellyn, Evan Henry
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (*Bristol, S*
Lowe, Francis William
Macdona, John Cumming
MacIver, David (*Liverpool*)
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Majendie, James A. H.
Malcolm, Ian
Manners, Lord Cecil
Milvain, Thomas
Molesworth, Sir Lewis
Morgan, David J (*Walthamst'w*
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mowbray, Sir Robert Gray C.
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Murray, Charles J. (*Coventry*)
Murray, Col. Wyndham (*Bath*
Nicol, Donald Ninian
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Parker, Sir Gilbert
Percy, Earl
Pierpoint, Robert
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Purvis, Robert
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Ridley, Hn. M. W. (*Stalybridge*
Ridley, S. F. (*Bethnal Green*)
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Robinson, Brooke
Round, Rt. Hon, James
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford-
Smith, Abel H. (*Hertford, E.*)
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*,
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Talbot, Rt Hn. J G. (*Oxf'd. Univ.*
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Thornton, Percy M.
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. William Hall
Walrond, Rt Hn. Sir William H.
Warde, Colonel C. E.
Webb, Col. William George
Welby, Sir Charles G. E. (*Notts.*
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Williams, Colonel R. (*Dorset*)
Wilson John (*Glasgow*)
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

Tellers for the Noes—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

SMALL HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

[Second Reading].

Mr. BLACK (Banffshire) moved the Second Reading of this Bill. He said it was a measure to facilitate the acquiring of land by small holders. Few things were more pathetic than the study of the statistics of the moving of the population of the crofting districts during the last thirty years. Migration from the fishing villages to the towns was constantly going on and the consequence was that labour was scarce in the country and the physique of the people was deteriorating. Any measure which would tend to check that process and retain the population in the country must be of great benefit to the country and to this Empire. Over 1,500 holders would be benefited by the provisions of this Bill in the county of Banff. The constituency of the Lord Advocate would also be benefited, and instead of enjoying a precarious tenure the crofters would secure by this measure fixity of tenure. They had heard a great deal—

Notice taken that forty Members were not present; House counted, and forty Members not being present——

The House was adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Twelve of the Clock till to-morrow.

Adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 28th May, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Railway Bill. Read the third time, and passed. (New Title.)

Great Southern and Western Railway Bill; Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland Bill; Mullingar, Kells, and Drogheda Railway Bill; Plymouth Corporation Bill; Woolwich Borough Council Bill. Read the third time and passed.

Exeter Railway Bill [Lords], (not amended). Considered; to be read the third time.

Lanarkshire and Dumbartonshire Railway Bill; Middlesbrough Corporation Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Private Bills, etc. Ordered, That Standing Orders 39, 129, and 230 be suspended, and that the time for depositing Petitions and Memorials against Private Bills, or against any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate, and for depositing duplicates of any Documents relating to any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate, also for depositing at the Private Bill Office all Documents relating to any Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the Recess.—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means.*)

Caledonian Railway Order Confirmation Bill. Bill to confirm a Provisional Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to the Caledonian Railway, ordered to be brought in by The Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor-General for Scotland.

Caledonian Railway Order Confirmation Bill. "To confirm a Provisional Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to the Caledonian Railway," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday 9th June, and to be printed. (Bill 228.)

Forth Navigation Order Confirmation. Bill to confirm a Provisional Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to the Forth Navigation, ordered to be brought in by The Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor-General for Scotland.

Forth Navigation Order Confirmation Bill. "To confirm a Provisional Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to the Forth Navigation," presented; and ordered to be considered upon Monday, 8th June.

Thames Conservancy Bill. Order (24th February) for Second Reading read, and discharged. Bill withdrawn.

Patent Office Extension Bill. Ordered, That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Patent Office Extension Bill with respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bills.—(*Mr. Arthur Elliot.*)

Merthyr Tydvil Urban District Council Bill. Reported from the Police and Sanitary Committee, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

All Saints, Poplar (Rate Abolition) Bill [Lords]. Reported, without Amendment; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. Bill to be read the third time.

Western Valleys (Monmouthshire) Sewerage Board Bill. Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PETITIONS.

CANADIAN CATTLE (IMPORTATION).

Petition from Harwich, for the abolition of restrictions; to lie upon the Table.

EMIGRATION LODGING HOUSES, LIVERPOOL.

Petition from Liverpool, for the abatement of alleged nuisance; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.

Petitions against: from Cheetham Hill; East Anglia; and, Rochdale; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON - RENEWAL) BILL, AND LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL.

Two Petitions from Patricroft, against; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL.

Petition against: from Cheetham Hill; East Anglia; and, Rochdale; to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petitions against (praying to be heard by Counsel): from Freemen and Apprentices of the River Thames; the Amalgamated Society of Watermen, Lightermen, and Watchmen of the River Thames, and the Society of Foremen Lightermen of the River Thames; Corporation of Queenborough; Great Western Railway Company; Henry Chaloner Smith; Regent's Canal and Dock Company; Great Northern Railway Company; Lee Conservancy Board; and, the Conservators of the River Thames; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill.

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Maidenhead; Rugby; Brymbo; and, Lochwinnoch; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

SUEZ CANAL (COMMERCIAL, No. 4, 1903).

Copy presented, of Returns of Shipping and Tonnage, 1900, 1901, and 1902 (in continuation of "Commercial, No. 2, 1902") [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, dated 28th May, 1903, providing for the distribution of the General Aid Grant (with Explanatory Memorandum) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (ACQUISITION OF LAND).

Return presented, relative thereto (ordered 8th July, 1902.—*Sir Walter Foster*); to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 182.)

BRITISH SOUTH AFRICAN (TAXATION OF NATIVES).

Return presented, relative thereto (Address 24th February.—*Mr. Herbert Samuel*); to lie upon the Table.

IRISH LAND BILL.

Return ordered, "showing particulars with respect to advances for purchase of holdings and repayments to Land Commission under Clauses 1 and 40."—(*Mr. Wyndham.*) Return presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 183.)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Fenton Urban District's Education Scheme.

MR. TALBOT (Oxford University): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether his attention has been called to the fact that the scheme of the Fenton Urban District Education Committee contains a provision that no clergyman or minister of any denomination is eligible for election on the Committee to be appointed; and, if so, whether he will withhold his sanction from this portion of the scheme.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) The scheme for the appointment of the Education Committee of the Fenton Urban District Council makes full provision for the representation of the various kinds of education in the district, and provides, amongst other things, for the appointment of members on the recommendation of associations of Church of England schools and Roman Catholic schools, and of the Free Church Council. These bodies must be represented by persons other than clergymen or ministers, and the Board considered that as due representation of these kinds of schools was assured, the Council might claim a discretion as to the presence of clergymen or ministers on its Committee.

Haverhill and District School Board.

MR. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education if he will state what will be the functions of the Haverhill and District School Board between 1st July, the appointed day upon which the West Suffolk County Council assume control over the provided schools in its area, and 1st October, the appointed day upon which the Essex County Council assume control over the provided schools in its area. During the above period whose duty will it be to look after the education of the children residing in one county and hitherto in attendance at an elementary school in the other; who will remunerate the attendance officer and whose servant will he be, and how will his remuneration be apportioned; how will the debts on the buildings and joint costs in connection therewith be apportioned between schools erected in the two counties. How and when is the balance standing to the credit of the Haverhill and District School Board to be apportioned; with a balance in hand by the School Board sufficient to carry on the schools within its area to 1st October, can the West Suffolk County Council issue a precept for the area already provided for; if so, what becomes of the share of the credit-balance paid by the ratepayers in the Suffolk portion of the School Board area.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) Between the 1st July and the 1st October, the School Board will continue to carry out its ordinary functions in the portion of its district which lies within the County of Essex. During this period the West Suffolk education authority will be responsible for the attendance at school of all children residing withi their portion of the School Board district, irrespective of what school they are attending; and the School Board will be under a similar obligation in respect of the remainder of the district. Each body will be responsible for providing and paying for their own attendance officer. The apportionment of any debts or balances will be a matter for agreement between the West Suffolk and the Essex education authorities under Section 68 of the Local Government Act of 1894. The West Suffolk County Council have power to raise a rate over the whole of their area. After the balance has been apportioned the share of the Suffolk portion of the district will be placed to the credit of that district.

The Admiralty and Devonport Brewster Sessions.

SIR THOMAS DEWAR (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware that the captain of the Naval Barracks, Devonport, attended with about thirty men in uniform the brewster sessions, recently held, to oppose the renewal of licences; and, if so, will he say whether his action was sanctioned by the Admiralty authorities.

(*Answered by Mr. Arnold-Forster.*) At the recent brewster sessions at Devonport the renewal of certain licences was opposed on behalf of the Admiralty, and the captain of the Naval Depôt attended as a witness. His action in doing so has the full approval of the Admiralty. There is no foundation for the statement that he was accompanied by a number of men in uniform.

Ophthalmia at Hanwell Poor Law Schools.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that an outbreak of ophthalmia at the Hanwell Poor Law Schools has affected 230 children between 4th April and 16th May of this year; whether he has any official Reports showing that this outbreak has been due to the premature return of partially cured children from the ophthalmic school to the main school; and, if so, will he state what steps are being taken in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) I am aware of the outbreak which has recently occurred at the schools referred to. The managers obtained the services of Dr. Sydney Stephenson, and I have seen a Report by him on the subject. It appears that the outbreak was a mild form of conjunctivitis or blight. This is an ailment which is very prevalent among children and which readily yields to suitable treatment. I am not aware of any Report to show that the outbreak was due to the cause referred to in the Question. Indeed the evidence indicates that the infection was introduced into the schools by a child recently admitted from Southwark. I am informed that the managers re-opened a portion of the former ophthalmic school for the reception of the children affected, and I understand that the action which they have taken on the advice of Dr. Stephenson is being attended with success. Only sixty of the children now remain isolated and under treatment.

Epidemics at Hanwell Poor Law Schools.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: To ask the President of the Local Government Board during how many weeks in the past twelve months there have been epidemics of illness in the Hanwell Poor Law Schools.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) It appears from a Return which I have received from the clerk to the managers that during the year ended Saturday last there have been three slight epidemics of illness at these schools. Thus, there were fifty-nine cases of influenza during nine weeks, forty-three cases of chicken pox during twelve weeks, and twenty-six cases of whooping cough during ten weeks. The total number of cases of all other diseases for the year is nine. During thirteen weeks there was no case of disease in the schools. I am informed that there have been no deaths there since June, 1901. This reply does not take account of the mild attack of "blight" which has recently occurred in the schools.

Poor Law Nurses.

MR. TALBOT: To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has taken into consideration the Report of the Departmental Committee on Poor Law Nursing, dated 10th November, 1902; and whether it is still his intention to recommend the training of a class of qualified nurses in the smaller workhouses.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) I can only state at present that the Report referred to is under my consideration.

Calf Lymph for Scotland.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the President of the Local Government Board, in view of the fact that the Local Government Board for Scotland paid to Dr. Blaxall, of the Government Bacteriological Laboratory in London, £105 for 2,220 tubes of glycerinated calf lymph during the year ending 31st March last, will he state whether this lymph was produced at the cost of the Local Government Board.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) The lymph referred to was prepared from calves in the stables of the Local Government Board and was uniform with other lymph issued by them, but the cost of its production and preparation was borne by Dr. Blaxall. I should add that Dr. Blaxall is not required to devote his whole time to his services to my Department.

Post Office Pensions—Case of William Sample.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that William Sample, of Redcar, Yorks, entered the postal service on 15th February 1871, obtained a Civil Service certificate on 15 May 1871, and worked continuously until 22nd April 1902, but has been pensioned on a basis of seventeen years' service instead of the thirty-one years actually performed; and whether the Treasury will reconsider this case.

(*Answered by Mr. Arthur Elliot.*) William Sample obtained a Civil Service certificate in 1871, by which he became qualified for the post of an established rural postman. He declined, however, to accept that appointment, and preferred to serve until 1885 in a capacity in respect of which pension cannot lawfully be granted. I can hold out no hope that the Treasury will reconsider his case.

Pay of Royal Army Medical Corps in India.

DR. THOMPSON (Monaghan, N.): To ask the Secretary of State for India if he will explain why certain increases of pay and charge pay, granted by Royal Warrant of 26th March 1902, to officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps, and drawn all over the world since that date, are still withheld in India.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) The Royal Warrant of 24th March 1902 amended certain articles of the Pay Warrant and was therefore subject to the last clause in the preamble of the Pay Warrant which declares that it is not in force in the Indian Empire. The question of the pay of the Royal Army Medical Corps in India has, however, been under consideration; and revised rates, giving a substantial increase to the ranks of lieutenant, captain, and lieutenant-colonel, have been sanctioned with effect from 24th November 1902.

DR. THOMPSON: To ask the Secretary of State for India if he is aware that certain officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps serving in India are receiving less pay than if they were at home; and, if so, whether he will, with a view to promoting contentment amongst the officers of this corps, assimilate the pay of these officers in India and at home.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) The Secretary of State has been in correspondence with the Government of India in regard to the rates of pay of officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps serving in India, and a revised scale has been sanctioned to have effect from 24th November 1902. The rates of pay under this new scale, when converted into British currency, are superior to the rates recently laid down for the Royal Army Medical Corps at home, except in the case of officers holding brevet rank. It is not in accordance with the general practice of the Government of India to grant higher pay to an officer holding rank of this description.

Deposition of the Maharajah of Panna.

MR. WEIR: To ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is now prepared to lay upon the Table of the House Papers relative to the deposition of the Maharajah of Panna.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) No, Sir.

Cases of Plague in India amongst persons employed on Relief Works.

MR. WEIR: To ask the Secretary of State for India if he will state the number of persons employed on relief works in India since the 1st January last; how many of these persons have died of plague; and how many have been inoculated with plague serum.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) The number of persons employed on relief works in India at the end of each month of the present year was—January, 23,227; February, 26,414; March, 40,364; April, 46,793. The number of deaths from plague among the relief workers is not known, but as relief works are confined to the Raipur District in the Central Provinces, which district has so far been free from plague, it may be presumed that no deaths were due to that disease, and that protective inoculation was not offered to the relief workers.

Birching of Youthful Offenders.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether a magistrate has power to order a constable to inflict or witness any birching order not carried out under any legal sentence, or to direct a birching, not under a legal sentence, to be carried out within the precincts of the court; and will he say whether the rods for such unofficial birchings are supplied at the public expense, and whether any fee is paid and, if so, from what source to the person who inflicts the punishment.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas.*) I do not think I can add anything of substance to the Answer which I gave the hon. Member on the

26th March last,† unless he desired to draw my attention to some particular case into which inquiry ought to be made. I can only say that birchings such as those to which I understand the hon. Member to refer are not carried out in pursuance of any order of a magistrate, though no doubt sometimes at his suggestion. They are matters of arrangement between the parent and the person who inflicts the punishment, and I have no cognisance of the details of any such arrangement.

Canal Tolls in Ireland.

MR. KENNEDY (Westmeath, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction will consider the advisability of exercising its powers under Section 17 of the Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act, 1899, of appearing before the Railway and Canal Commissioners on behalf of the boatowners on the Royal Canal who feel aggrieved by reason of the tolls charged by the Midland Great Western Railway on canal traffic, when added to the working expenses, being in excess of the freight charged on that company's railway for the same class of goods, thereby destroying the competition of the canal; and whether seeing that, while the directors of the railway company have reduced their freight for coal by about 6d. per ton from Dublin to Mullingar, the reduction in canal tolls which they offer the boatowners amounts to only about 1d. per ton, he will say whether he can take any and, if so, what action in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The Midland Great Western Railway Company, on the 30th ultimo, forwarded to the Department a list of reduced tolls for the conveyance of coal by canal from Dublin to Mullingar which they proposed to charge as from 1st May. If the boatowners are aggrieved by the tolls as now revised the Department will be happy to consider any further representations which they may desire to make on the subject.

Monaghan Infirmary.

DR. THOMPSON: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state why the Local Government Board have refused to permit the governors of the County Monaghan Infirmary to see the Report of the Local Government Board inspector relative to the condition of their hospital and its suitability as a training school for nurses.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) No application has been made by the governors of the infirmary for permission to see the Report in question. In any event such reports are confidential documents intended for the information of the Local Government Board, and it would be contrary to the invariable practice to make them public.

Sanatoria for Consumptives in Ireland.

DR. THOMPSON: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state what steps have been taken by the County Councils to establish a sanatorium for consumptive patients in each Irish county.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) So far as the Local Government Board is aware no definite action has yet been taken by any County Council to establish a sanatorium for consumptive patients. Some preliminary steps to this end have been taken by the Belfast Corporation, and the Cork Branch of the Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis are urging upon the local authorities the necessity for taking action in the matter.

Drum (County Monaghan) Water Supply.

DR. THOMPSON: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will explain why the Local Government Board refuse to allow the village of Drum, county Monaghan, to obtain a supply of pure drinking water.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The Board has not refused to allow this village to obtain a pure water supply. On the contrary it has frequently urged upon the District Council the necessity of taking steps in this direction.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxx., 297.

Irish Medical Officers of Health.

DR. THOMPSON: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state what steps have been taken by the County Councils to appoint a medical officer of health for each county; and if he will direct the Local Government Board to impress on the County Councils the vital necessity of the appointment of such an official.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) County Councils, not being sanitary authorities, have no power to appoint medical officers of health for their respective counties.

Action against the Donegal Board of Guardians.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the amount of the verdict and costs obtained by a contractor named Diver against the Donegal Board of Guardians in March 1902; and, in view of the fact that the guardians were advised that there was no defence, will he explain why the Local Government Board auditor insisted on the guardians proceeding with litigation; and whether, in view of the document issued by the clerk of the union for signature for the purpose of trying to raise a loan to meet these costs, will he state what steps he proposes to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The contractor obtained a verdict for £43 6s. in respect of extra work unauthorised by the guardians, but certified by the architect. I have no information as regards the costs. I am not aware that the guardians were advised there was no defence. The auditor denies that he insisted on the guardians proceeding with litigation. The Local Government Board have sanctioned a supplemental loan of £400 for the purpose, amongst other things, of paying law costs.

Clerks in the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction.

MR. T. M. HEALY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether, in view of the fact that the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction have in their service clerks whose periods of employment as such under the Crown range from nine to eleven years and whose salaries are considerably under £100 per annum, he will state the maximum rate of salary these clerks can receive, when they will reach it in the ordinary course, and how long approximately they will then have spent in the employment of the Crown; whether the salaries of all or any of these gentlemen have been reduced since entering the Department's service, and whether such reductions were due to misconduct or ineptitude. And, whether, in view of the fact that clerical positions, which would have afforded opportunity for promotion for these gentlemen, have been bestowed on persons of less official experience, will he state how many of the temporary clerical staff of the Department have salaries of £100 per annum and upwards, and how long have such persons been continuously in the employment of the Crown, and whether the Department intend to take steps to place both classes of clerks on the same footing.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) In reply to the first paragraph. The number of such clerks is three. Before their appointment they were employed in a temporary capacity only. Their services were determinable at a week's notice, and they had no prospects of advancement. Their present appointments carry valuable privileges, including pension rights. Their salaries rise by annual increments of £2 10s. to £120, and thenceforth by £5 to £150. In two cases the initial salary was at the rate of £90 per annum as compared with £91 5s. when they were temporarily employed. The number of clerks referred to in the second paragraph is two. One had eight years' continuous service under the Crown. They are in the same position in respect to increments and maximum of salary as other clerks of the same class employed in the Civil Service.

Granard Rural District Councils' Printing Contracts — County Meath List of Voters—Cost of Printing.

MR. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Local Government Board can state the amount paid for printing and advertising for the year ended 31st March last by the Granard No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3 Rural District Councils respectively; when were the contracts taken for this work, and who were declared contractors; and whether contracts have been made for the execution of this work for the current year; and, if so, when, and what are the amounts of same.

MR. TULLY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Local Government Board can state the amount paid each year for the last three years by the Meath County Council for the printing of the List of Voters for the County Meath; and who was the contractor for the execution of this work.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) It has not been found possible to obtain the information desired in these Questions in time to enable replies to be given to-day. Perhaps the hon. Member will repeat them at a future date.

Sale of the Allen Estate.

MR. TULLY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Land Commission are aware that in the case of the sale of the Allen Estate, near Carrick-on-Shannon, in the year 1881, two sub-tenants, named Peter Keogh and James Costello, to an occupier named Pat Costello, were duly declared purchasers of the respective portions of land in their possession, and that the consent of Pat Costello was duly lodged with the solicitors having carriage of sale, Messrs. E. L. Hunt and Son, 32, George's Street, Limerick; and, if so, whether the Land Commission can explain on what grounds these men have not been duly registered as owners of the farms which they bought under these circumstances.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The proceedings for sale in the estate referred to cannot be identified on the records of the Land Commission.

Fair Rents on Colonel French's Estate.

MR. TULLY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Land Commission have made any investigation into the complaint from Mr. Thomas M. Killoran, Ballymote, that an appeal was heard by them against the fair rent fixed by the Sub-Commissioners on 19th June, 1900, on a holding on the estate of Colonel French which he purchased from Mrs. Kate Shaw, formerly Roddy, although no notice of appeal was served on Mr. Killoran or Mrs. Shaw; and, if so, will he say with what result.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) This Question has been referred to the Judicial Commissioner for report, but I regret that a reply cannot be given to it to-day.

Irish Land Acts—Terms of Repayment.

SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the normal term of repayment under Section 25 of the Irish Land Act, 1896, is seventy-two and a half years or forty-two and a half years: and whether he can state in how many cases up to and ending 31st March last have tenant purchasers intimated that they will repay on the forty-two and a half years system; in how many cases have they intimated that with decadal reductions they will pay on the seventy-two and a half years system; and further down to the same date in how many cases have tenant purchasers under the Acts of 1885, 1888, and 1891 exercised the option, given to them under Section 25 of the Act of 1896, and converted their periods of repayment from forty-nine years to seventy-nine years so as to secure decadal reductions.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The main provisions of Section 25 are prospective, as well as retrospective, and in effect every land purchase annuity at the end of the decade is reduced unless, in accordance with Sub-section (3), the proprietor of a holding applies that the annuity shall not be reduced for the coming decade. If he so applies the annuity is not reduced and then the normal term of repayment, in cases of annuities created since the Act of 1896, is forty-two and a half years. The effect of each of the three decade applications is to extend the term from forty-two and a half years to seventy-two and a half years. Eight hundred and ninety-seven purchasers under the Acts of 1891–1896 became entitled to the decade revision up to 1st May, 1903, and of these nineteen objected to have their annuities varied. Under the Acts of 1885–1888, 22,247 purchasers became similiarly entitled to the decade revision, and of these 1,011 objected to the revision. In cases under the Acts of 1885–1888 the result of the application of the decade system is to extend the term from forty-nine to seventy-nine years, provided the reduction is made at the end of each of the three decades.

Mullingar Rifle Range.

Mr. KENNEDY: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that owing to the new rifle range at Mullingar not being ready for practice, the 1st Battalion Connaught Rangers stationed at that town have been ordered away for three or four months practice; and, if so, whether, in the interests of the locality, he will take steps to secure the opening of the new rifle range at an early date.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The purchase of the land required for the Mullingar rifle range has not yet been completed, and, as the hon. Member has been previously informed, it is not possible to commence the construction of the range until the land is in possession of the War Department.

Sleeping Accommodation in Military Guard Rooms.

Mr. COLSTON (Gloucestershire Thornbury): To ask the Secretary of State for War if any improvement has yet been effected in the sleeping accommodation provided in military guard rooms.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) Difficulty has been experienced in obtaining a satisfactory mattress for the guard rooms. and some new mattresses are now on trial.

Limits of Army Order 9, of January, 1903.

Mr. JOHN HUTTON (Yorkshire Richmond): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will ascertain from the Indian Government their reasons for recommending that the Army Order, No. 9, of January, 1903, should be limited to troops engaged in the operations previous to 3rd March 1893; and whether they have any reasons for not extending the date so as to include the Sima Relief Column, under Captain Davis, D.S.O., which started from Bhamo in April, 1893, and which was the last expedition that season; whether he can explain why the Army Order, No. 9, of January, 1903, conferring medals upon troops engaged in 1893, has been so long delayed.

(*Answered by Mr Secretary Brodrick.*) I think it would be most convenient if the hon. Member would kindly address his inquiries direct to the Indian Government.

Tenders for Cordite Cartridges.

Mr. EVELYN CECIL (Aston Manor): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that tenders for a quantity of ·303 cordite cartridges were sent in by the contractors so far back as 18th April, and that no replies to those tenders have been received, and that in consequence of this delay thousands of workpeople have been thrown out of employment, he can hasten the placing of these orders.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The quantity required is very small in comparison with the orders given during the war, and in any case I feel a large discharge of workmen by contractors is unavoidable. The allotment will be made at once.

Rifle Clubs in Ireland.

Mr. O'SHEE (Waterford, W.): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will say how many rifle clubs affiliated to the National Rifle Association exist in Ireland, and what is their total membership; and do the same regulations as to the authorisation and formation of rifle clubs apply to Ireland as to Great Britain.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) There are eight rifle clubs in Ireland affiliated to the National Rifle Association, and the total number of members is 366. The regulations as to authorisation and formation are the same as those in Great Britain, with the exception that the approval of the Irish Government is necessary.

Military Ranges in Ireland.

Mr. O'SHEE: To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will say what is the number of military ranges in Ireland; have any ranges been abandoned since 1899, and have any new ranges been acquired and constructed; how many Irish ranges on which iron targets were heretofore used have, since 1899, had paper or canvas targets substituted; is it proposed to make the same alteration in all the ranges; and whether it has been decided to abandon any of the ranges now in use.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The number of military ranges in Ireland is twenty-nine. Three have been abandoned since 1899, two have been acquired and constructed, and several others enlarged and improved. On seven ranges paper or canvas targets have been substituted for iron, and it is proposed to make this alteration in all the ranges. It has not been decided to abandon any of the ranges now in use.

Inoculation for Plague in Hong Kong.

Mr. WEIR: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the system of inoculation with plague serum which is in force in India has been adopted in Hong Kong; and, if not, will he consider the expediency of calling for a report on the subject.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) The hon. Member will see from Dr. Simpson's report, which has just been placed in the Library of the House, that the inoculation of those who wish to be protected with Haffkine's Plague Prophylactic is already carried on in Hong Kong, and that Dr. Simpson recommends the continuance of this practice.

Chinese Labour for South African Mines.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that the mine owners of South Africa claim to be acting with the approval and support of Lord Milner in attempting to introduce Chinese labour for work in the mines; and, if so, whether he will direct the attention of Lord Milner to the fact that the Government is opposed to such labour being introduced.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) No, Sir; I am not aware that any such claim has been made, and Lord Milner is in full possession of the views of His Majesty's Government, which have been publicly stated on several occasions.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Ragging in the 21st Lancers.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is in a position to give any information to the House in reference to the ill-treatment of an officer of the 21st Lancers.

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford): A Report on this subject has been received from the Field Marshal Commanding the 3rd Army Corps, and the Commander-in-Chief will shortly give his decision. Perhaps the hon. Member would postpone his Question till Monday week.

Typewriting Telegraph Instruments for Army Field Service.

Mr. JOHN CAMPBELL (Armagh, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the War Office has made any tests as to the capabilities of the typewriting telegraph instruments employed in the field services of Germany, Austria, and the United States; and, if so, with what result.

Mr. BRODRICK: We have no information to show that typewriting telegraph instruments are used in field service by either Germany, Austria or the United States. An instrument of this nature has been tested by the War Office but the report on it is unfavourable.

Disease Infected Army Blankets.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the scientific questions raised by the recent outbreak of fever on the "Cornwall," attributed to the use of infected blankets, he will cause an inquiry into the matter to be conducted either by officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps or in conjunction with the medical staff of the Local Government Board.

MR. BRODRICK: I shall not be in a position to reply to any further Questions on the subject of these blankets until I am in possession of the Report from General Officer Commanding in South Africa which has been called for.

South Australian Government and Foreign Governments.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the South Australian Government have agreed to the view stated in his recent despatch that on matters relating to Foreign Governments His Majesty's Government should deal with the Government of the Commonwealth, and not with the State Governments.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): I have no information. There has not yet been time to receive a reply to my despatch of the 15th of April included in the Papers recently published.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: This day fortnight.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: We have to await a reply by mail.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Then this day month.

Mediterranean Fleet—Gunnery Practice.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty has he now received the Report, called for by the Admiralty on 11th May, on the alleged waste of ammunition in the Mediterranean Fleet on 29th April last by eight battleships firing away over 7,000 rounds at distances and under conditions depriving the practice of utility as gunnery training for accuracy in marksmanship; what was the range at which the practice was conducted, the time it took, and the number and approximate value of the rounds fired. In what respects did this practice depart from the Admiralty regulation that the attainment of good shooting and proficiency in gunnery are always to be considered as taking precedence over all other duties; by whom was this practice ordered and its conditions prescribed, and by whom has the Report thereon been made. In view of the practice which had been adopted on 14th May last that the reasons of failure in gunnery practice are reported on by the admirals under whose orders the ships are acting, that the Reports are considered by the Admiralty, and such steps taken with regard to the individual officers concerned as in the opinion of the Admiralty are required, will he say whether any, and, if so, what steps have been, or will be taken, in this case.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W.): I gave the hon. Member an undertaking that I would inform him as soon as the Report on this subject was received. That undertaking I will not fail to carry out, but I believe that Sunday next is the earliest date at which it will be possible to receive the Report of the Commander-in-Chief from Alexandria.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I will postpone the Question till June 9. It was not want of confidence in the hon. Gentleman's undertaking that induced me to put it to-day.

Preferential Trading with British Colonies.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has received by telegraph the exact words of the reference to preferential trading in the speech of the Governor-General of Australia on the opening of the Commonwealth Parliament; and, if so, whether he can communicate them to Parliament.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: No, Sir but I have telegraphed to ask for them.

Sangramgar Murder Case.

Mr. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to the trial and composition of the jury in what is known as the Sangramgar murder case, in which one Martin was accused of the murder of Bistu Bowri, when twelve special jurors were summoned, six Europeans and six Indians, from whom five jurors were to be chosen, and that of the six Indians five were rejected except one, who with four Europeans from the panel, tried and acquitted the accused; and, if so, will the action of the district judge in summoning a jury half of Europeans and half of Indians and in allowing the actual jury to consist of four Europeans and one Indian be inquired into, as well as the evidence of the alleged partiality of two or three of the jurors as shown on the jury being struck and during the trial, especially with reference to Mr. M'Nicoll and Mr. Davies.

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Lord George Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing): I have no information as to the case referred to in the question. If any irregularity occurred in the trial it was open to the Local Government to apply to the High Court to deal with the proceedings in exercise of their power of revision. But, as regards the constitution of the jury, I may remind the hon. Member that, under Section 450 of the Criminal Procedure Code, if any European British subject requires to be tried by a mixed jury, "the trial should be by a jury of which not less than half of the number shall be Europeans."

Indian Railways.

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he can state when the Report of Mr. Robertson, the specialist employed by the Government of India for the purpose of examining the Indian Railway systems, will be issued; and whether he is now in a position to give to the House its main recommendations.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: Mr. Robertson's Report has been printed and published in India, and I am expecting shortly to receive a large number of copies for issue in this country. In the meantime I do not propose to make any statement as to the nature of the recommendations which it contains.

Germany and Canadian Trade.

Mr. BLACK (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Germany stands alone in differentiating or threatening to differentiate against Canada in consequence of the recent preference given to British trade.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord Cranborne, Rochester): So far as we are aware the answer is in the negative.

Clapham Common—Private Employment of Constables.

Mr. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that inhabitants resident on and near Clapham Common subscribe for one or two additional constables owing to the general insecurity of property in that neighbourhood owing to frequent burglaries; and that, in some gardens connected with various squares in London, private policemen are paid for by the adjacent occupiers in addition to their ordinary rates for police protection; and, if so, will he reconsider the decision of a late Chief Constable of the Metropolitan Police not to protect the backs of houses which abut on gardens, usually locked by gates at night, although easily scaled.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Akers-Douglas, Kent, St. Augustine's): There are a considerable number of cases (particulars of which will be found in the Commissioners' Annual Report) in which additional constables are appointed at the cost of private persons under Section 8 of the Metropolitan Police Act, 1839. One such constable is employed in the neighbourhood of Clapham Common; but I am not aware that there is general insecurity of property there. As regards the latter part of the Question, a police regulation has long been in force forbidding constables to leave their beats to enter or patrol private grounds except when they have reason to believe that an offence is being, or is likely to be, committed; and in the opinion of the Commissioner it is necessary in the public interest that this regulation should be maintained.

Treatment of Habitual Criminals.

MR. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the cases which the Recorder of Manchester tried at the City Assizes there on Tuesday the 26th instant: of William Whitby, who was found to have been convicted of stealing eleven times since 1898; of James Wright, described as a confirmed pickpocket; and of Ann Smith, who stole a purse, and had been eighteen times convicted of different offences; and if so, will he say when he will be able to introduce his Bill for the segregation of habitual and irreclaimable criminals.

MR. AKERS DOUGLAS: The hon. Member has been good enough to send me reports of the cases referred to, and I can only say that many of a similar character come before me from day to day. I am most anxious to do something in the direction indicated, and have proposals under immediate consideration; but I can make no promise as to the date at which I may be able to bring in a Bill.

Crime in the Metropolis.

MR. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state what robberies and burglaries have been reported by the police as having taken place in Eaton Square and Chester Square since the 1st January, 1902; and whether, seeing that within a recent period sixteen robberies of a burglarious character were made in the neighbourhood of Dollis Hill, Willesden, he will state what steps he proposes to take.

MR. AKERS DOUGLAS: Since 1st January, 1902, there has been one burglary and two housebreakings in Eaton Square and Chester Square, and in two of these cases arrests were made. There have been no recent cases of burglary at Dollis Hill, but no doubt the hon. Member's figure is right if he includes not only cases of housebreaking but also minor cases of larceny from outhouses within an area of four square miles. The Commissioner of Police has constantly under his consideration the needs of the various districts of the Metropolis, and augments the police from time to time as necessity arises.

Gambling in Grain Futures.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): On behalf of the hon. Member for the St. Patrick's Division of Dublin I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has yet received copies of the legislation passed by Foreign Governments and by the Canadian Government in regard to the regulation of gambling in futures or options in food stuffs; and, if so, whether he can lay those Parliamentary Papers before the House; and, if not, whether he can say when he expects to be able to do so.

*THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BONAR LAW, Glasgow, Blackfriars): I have received Reports from His Majesty's representatives in the various foreign countries and from Canada, bearing upon the matter referred to by the hon. Member, and propose to lay them upon the Table very shortly, as soon as they have been printed and summarised.

Telegraphic Delays—Message Timing.

MR. JOHN CAMPBELL (Armagh, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been called to complaints that telegraph clerks fill up the forms so as to make the time of handing in later than it really was; and, if so, whether he will consider the advisability of providing on the forms for public use a space in which the sender can insert the time according to the office clock at which the message was handed in.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.): It is but very rarely that telegraphists are alleged to have misstated the time of "handing in" a telegram, and I am not prepared to accept the suggestion of the hon. Member that I should accept an entry of time made by the sender of the telegram, and purporting to be taken from the office clock.

Mr. JOHN CAMPBELL: I can give instances in my own experience where the message has been delayed half an hour?

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: If the hon. Member will bring any such case to my notice I will inquire, but unless it is done immediately it is very difficult to arrive at any satisfactory result.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: But cannot some arrangement be made for the clerk to put on the message the hour at which it is received?

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: That is done. The number of complaints of this kind is very small. The whole object of the regulation is to get the work at the counter done as quickly as possible, so as not to incommode the public.

Silent Telephone Cabinets for the Post Office.

Mr. JOHN CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether, in view of the fact that a recent contract for 150 silent telephone cabinets was given to Maple and Co., in preference to the old sub-contractors, he will give the figures of the various tenders, and state how many of the Maple cabinets have been delivered, and how many of them accepted, and how many rejected; and will he also state, in the case of a contract for 300 telephone boards given to the same firm, how many of these instruments have been delivered, how many accepted, and how many rejected.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The hon. Member is under some misapprehension. The contract recently made with Messrs. Maple and Co. was for fifty, not 150, Silence Cabinets, and cabinets such as these have in recent years been made, not by sub-contractors, but in the Post Office factory. All the firms who had ever made Silence Cabinets for the Post Office, and one or two firms who had made cabinets for the Office of Works, were invited to tender, and the tender of Messrs. Maple and Co. was the lowest. I am not prepared to give the figures. The first cabinet, which was to be approved before the order was proceeded with, has been passed, and delivery of the whole is expected very shortly. The telephone boards mentioned by the hon. Member are not instruments, as he supposes, but merely little boards to hold the brackets on which a telephone rests. Two hundred and fifty, not 300, were ordered recently from Messrs. Maple and Co.; they have all been delivered, but it has been necessary to return them for a slight alteration. These boards also have previously been made in the Post Office factory.

Mr. JOHN CAMPBELL: May I ask how many of these cabinets have been returned "for a slight alteration?"

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I think all.

Poor Rates Demand Notes.

Mr. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE (Sussex, Horsham): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if the General Order of the Board, of 21st September, 1895, prescribing the form of demand note for payment of Poor Rate is still in force; and if the amount to be levied in an administrative county for the purposes of the Education Act, 1902, should be included in county purposes, or should be separately indicated.

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Walter Long, Bristol, S.): The Order of 1895 referred to has been superseded in the case of parishes containing agricultural land by an Order, dated 13th April, 1897; but, so far as relates to the point referred to in the Question, the provisions in the two Orders are the same. Both Orders prescribe as one item to be shown in the demand note the amount in the £ required for county contributions. The sum needed to meet the expenses of a County Council for the purchases of the Education Act, 1902, would form part of the county contributions, and the amount in the

£ required for this purpose should be included in this item. It should not be separately indicated in the demand note.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE: Then I take it the splitting of the rate in the demand note is not in accordance with the prescribed orders now in force.

MR. WALTER LONG: Certainly.

MR. WHITLEY (Halifax) asked whether it was not in the power of the local authority to give, on the demand note, not only the total of the rate, but the various sub-heads indicating how it was made up.

MR. WALTER LONG: The demand note is issued to the ratepayers by the overseers, and, as they have no knowledge of how the rate is made up, they cannot possibly indicate what proportion of the rate is to be devoted to a particular class of expenditure.

Public Elementary Schools under Trust Deeds.

MR. CUMMING MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe): On behalf of the hon. Member for the City of London (Sir Joseph Dimsdale), I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether, in the case of endowed schools, the trust deeds of which require them to be conducted as public elementary schools, the provisions of the London Education Bill as to appointment of managers and control by the local authority will apply if the governors of such schools elect not to accept a Parliamentary grant.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Sir WILLIAM ANSON, Oxford University): A school which, under the provisions of a scheme or trust deed, must be conducted as a public elementary school, must be subject to the provisions of the Act of 1902 as to the appointment of managers and the control of the local education authority. Whether a Parliamentary grant should be applied for or not rests with the local education authority and not with the managers. If the managers or governors refuse to accept from the local education authority the cost of maintenance for their school, such refusal will not thereby divest the local education authority of its right of control over secular instruction.

Free Education Dispute at Urmston.

MR. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether his attention has been drawn to the case of Mr. J. Wilshaw, of Urmston, Lancashire, who sent his child to the Church of England School in that town, but on asking the managers for free education was refused; whether he is aware that, on Mr. Wilshaw appealing to the Board of Education to secure free education for his child, under the Act of 1891, he was informed that he could have a free place for his child at the Roman Catholic School in Urmston; that Mr. Wilshaw applied for the admittance of his child to the nearest Church of England School, and was refused because no fee was offered; and that Mr. Wilshaw then brought the matter before the Bishop of Manchester, and received an answer stating that Mr. Wilshaw, he was informed, did not need any help, and endorsing the action of the managers of the Church school; and, if so, will he state what action does the Board propose to take in the matter.

SIR WILLIAM ANSON: The Urmston National School has a right to charge fees under Section 2 (2) of the Act of 1891; and the Board are not aware of anything in that Act which, while giving a parent the right to claim a free place for his child within a reasonable distance of his home, gives any right to claim such a free place at any particular school. It will be competent for the Lancashire County Council after the appointed day to consider the matter, if they so desire it. But I do not consider any action on the part of the Board to be necessary or desirable.

Scottish Tax Collection.

MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that Imperial taxes in St. Andrews, Dunfermline, and other places in Scotland are collected in licensed premises; and, if so, whether he will put a stop to this practice.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. ELLIOT, Durham): The facts are as stated in the Question. It may be difficult in some cases to obtain other accommodation, but I am in communication with the Inland Revenue on the subject.

Promotion from the Armagh Post Office.

MR. JOHN CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that a junior officer has been withdrawn from Armagh Post Office for temporary duty in the Surveying Department without the posting up of the usual notice inviting applications from the district for the performance of the work; and, if so, will he explain why the ordinary course has been departed from in this instance.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: Yes: the employment of the officer in question was duly authorised from headquarters. It was not necessary to post a notice inviting applications for this employment, as Mr. Boland was well known by the District Surveyor to be the most suitable candidate for the purpose.

Irish Northern Postal District—Selections for Special Duties.

MR. JOHN CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he can state what system prevails in the Northern Postal District (Ireland) with reference to the selection of charge clerks for special duties; whether he is aware that one officer from Armagh has been selected on three different occasions within a limited period for duty at Donegal and Limavady; whether he can state how many charge clerks are listed in the Northern District, and if there was no competent officer to be found in Donegal or Derry.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The system is to select the most suitable officer for the purpose who can be spared from his other duties. I am aware that one officer from Armagh has been selected on several occasions, but I am assured that in each case he was at the time the only suitable officer in the Northern District who could be spared. Twenty-two officers in the district are listed to act as clerks in charge—three of whom are attached to the Staff at Londonderry. No officer on the Donegal Staff is on the List.

Armagh Postal Staff—Extra Duties.

MR. JOHN CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that the male staff at Armagh Post Office, owing to depletion, are obliged to perform extra work daily, in some cases from 2 a.m. to 10 p.m.; that in other cases the usual relief for dinner has been suspended; and that some men, after a week's work ending at 10.15 p.m. on Saturday night, are obliged to resume work again at 2 a.m. on Sunday morning; and, if so, whether he can take steps to secure to the staff nine hours' rest after the completion of their daily work.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: No, Sir. No representations to this effect have reached me from the staff. If the facts are correctly stated in the Question the officers concerned should at once address a memorial to the Secretary, Dublin, or to me.

Irish Mail Delays.

MR. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is now in a position to state what steps, if any, have been taken to secure a more regular arrival of the Irish mails in Dublin; and whether he can give any assurance that the inconvenience caused by the missing of connections will not be repeated in future.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The occasional late arrival of the English mails in Dublin is sometimes due to unavoidable causes, such as unfavourable weather or accidents on the railway, but sometimes it is caused by the heavy traffic. When the number of passengers for Ireland is larger than usual, it is frequently necessary to run the night mail train to Holyhead in two portions, and as the first portion can be started little, if at all, before the appointed time, the second portion must be late in arrival at Holyhead. The railway company have been urged to make arrangements for reducing to a minimum the delay thus caused, but it is feared that some delay is unavoidable. In regard to the failure of connection in Ireland, I am considering whether any modification can advantageously be made in the arrangements for sending on the mails from Dublin to the South of Ireland; but I have not yet come to any decision in the matter.

Mr. CULLINAN: The London and North-Western Railway Company is receiving a huge subsidy for carrying mails, and it ought to be called upon to give better accommodation for passenger traffic.

Newtownhamilton Mail Service.

Mr. JOHN CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General, whether, seeing that the English mail does not arrive in Newtownhamilton, county Armagh, till about 5 p.m. he will consider some means of accelerating the service so that this mail may be delivered in the morning.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I regret that, as I informed the hon. Member in the letter which I addressed to him on the 13th instant, the circumstances do not enable me to accelerate the arrival of the English letters at Newtownhamilton.

Union Amalgamation (Ireland) Commission.

Mr. CULLINAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he will consider the advisability of including in the reference to the Commission on Amalgamation of Unions in Ireland the question of utilising some of the existing workhouses as educational and industrial training schools for orphans, and the children of habitual drunkards and criminals; as homes for unfortunate women with illegitimate children; and as asylums for harmless lunatic epileptics; and also the questions of the admission and treatment of tramps, with the object of devising a scheme which might generally be put in force to cope with the abuses of the existing law.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. Wyndham, Dover): The terms of reference are wide enough to enable the Commission to make recommendations for the better treatment of practically all these classes.

Mr. CULLINAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether, as the matters for investigation by the Commission on Amalgamation of Unions in Ireland will be varied and of concern to all parts of the country, he will consider the advisability of nominating a representative from the South to act on the Commission.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The Commission consists of three members, one of whom is the hon. Member for Mid Tyrone. It was considered that a small Commission of thoroughly competent and experienced gentlemen would better conduce to expedition and a workable scheme. It will invite the assistance of the most experienced local representatives throughout the country in the course of its investigations.

Mr. CULLINAN asked whether as the administration of the Poor Law varied greatly in the South from the system obtaining in the North of Ireland, the right hon. Gentleman would give the South some representation on the Commission.

Mr WYNDHAM: I am aware that the practice differs in the South from the North, and the attention of the Commission will be drawn to the fact, but I cannot promise to enlarge the Commission. It is essential if the inquiry is to be carried out in an expeditious and business-like manner, to have a small compact body to conduct it, rather than to place on it representatives from all parts of Ireland.

County Clare Police Force.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether there are any extra police remaining in the County Clare; whether any portions of that county remain proclaimed under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887; and whether the county is not in a perfectly peaceable state at present.

Mr. WYNDHAM: There are no extra police at present in Clare. Sections 3 and 4 of the Act of 1887 are in force in the county, and Section 2 is in force in a small portion of the county. A considerable improvement has taken place in the state of the county.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of advising the Lord Lieutenant to revoke the Proclamation?

Mr. WYNDHAM: I entertain hopes that it may be possible to do so shortly, but I am not prepared to say it can be done at the present moment.

County Clare Police and Mr. Patrick Meany.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will have orders sent to the Police in County Clare to cease following Mr. Patrick Meany, of Quin.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The movements of this man have been under police supervision because he was suspected of illegal practices. Latterly it has been found possible to relax the supervision.

Hospital Relief for Irish Police.

Mr. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Killarney Board of Guardians and others have complained that they are compelled to afford hospital relief to police constables in Ireland at the weekly average cost of all the patients; and whether, seeing that this sum is about 10s. per week less in each case than the actual cost, and having regard to the fact that these men are in receipt of full pay whilst in hospital, he will secure an amendment of the present regulations so that these policemen shall not remain a charge on the ratepayers.

Mr. WYNDHAM: Representations to this effect have been made by the Killarney and one or two other Boards of Guardians. The rate of payment by police constables in such circumstances is fixed by Statute, not by departmental regulation. I cannot undertake to introduce amending legislation in the direction suggested.

Ballypooreen Prisoners.

Mr. CULLINAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that eleven men who were fined nominal sums, or in default three days imprisonment, at the Ballypooreen, County Tipperary, Petty Sessions, on the 5th instant, immediately offered to go to prison, but that the Resident Magistrate declined to issue warrants for their arrest for a week; and, if so, will he explain why those men are daily taken to prison in batches of two, handcuffed together, and treated as ordinary criminals, in view of the nature of the offence.

Mr. WYNDHAM: I am informed that the police had reasonable grounds for apprehending an attempted rescue or violence, and that it was considered necessary, in consequence, to take the precaution of handcuffing the prisoners.

Mr. LEAMY (Kildare, N.): Can the right hon. Gentleman say when any rescue of prisoners was last attempted in Ireland?

[No answer was returned.]

Brussels Sugar Convention—Provision for Expenses.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury out of what funds voted for the services of the Board of Trade or the Foreign Office do His Majesty's Government propose to provide for the expenditure to be incurred by this country, and which will come in course of payment during the current financial year, for the organisation and working of the Permanent Commission for carrying out the Brussels Sugar Convention, which is to meet not later than Monday next, 1st June.

The PRIME MINISTER and FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): In answer to my hon. friend I have to say that such expenditure may properly be charged under sub-head C., special services, of the Board of Trade, or sub-head K., special missions and services, and the Vote for diplomatic and consular services. Both these heads include provision for analagous contributions to the expenses of international commissions abroad. The question whether the Foreign Office or the Board of Trade should provide these charges has not yet been decided, but probably the charge will fall on the Foreign Office.

Vote for Secret Service.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury have His Majesty's Government considered the propriety of reducing the Vote for Secret Service Money from £65,000 a year to a lower sum approaching that of £30,000, at which this Vote stood in, and for many years previous to 1898–9 ; is he aware that in the year 1901–02 only £48,316 was expended on Secret Service ; and will he say what circumstances those are which are now held to require the vote of a larger sum than was required in that year.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : The possibility of reduction was considered on the Estimates of the present year. I am aware of the amount actually expended in 1901–02, but I cannot undertake to state the reasons which were held to require a larger sum than was actually expended in that year, to be included in this year's estimate. I may add that I do not think it would be advisable on general grounds to reduce the amount of money spent on secret service in this country, which is very much smaller than that of other countries.

Procedure Rules.

MR. LODER (Brighton) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he proposes to find time after Whitsuntide to resume the consideration of Amendments to Standing Orders relating to Procedure of the House, unfinished last session.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : I should like to find time for finishing our work on these Standing Orders which, everybody will admit, are in an unsatisfactory condition, but I am afraid I cannot promise any particular date.

Sittings of Parliament.

MR. PAULTON (Durham, Bishop Auckland) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the attention of His Majesty's Government has been drawn to the question of making such alteration in the date at which Parliament is usually summoned to meet as would conduce to bringing the session to an end early in July ; and whether they will consider the advisability of appointing a Joint Committee of both Houses to deliberate and report upon the subject.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND : I beg at the same time to ask the first Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the vote upon the subject in another place, it is the intention of His Majesty's Government to take steps to alter the time of year at which Parliament shall assemble for the transaction of business.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : Personally I should be delighted if the session ended in July ; and in order to obtain that desirable result, if it could be so obtained, I should personally not object to meeting earlier. But I am afraid, if this House decides to meet earlier, that when July comes round it will be found that we will still have to sit till 12th August, and the result of the change will be not a diminution of our labours, but an augmentation of them. For these reasons I look with some scepticism upon the plan which has been suggested by the House of Lords.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Will the right hon. Gentleman take some steps to remedy the painful situation of this House being at variance with the House of Lords ?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If the differences between the two Houses are never on more important points I do not think it is a matter which need trouble us.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

DR. FARQUHARSON : What will be the business on the Monday the House re-assembles ?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I propose to put down Revenue Votes 1, 2, 4, and 5, then the Civil Service, Class 4, Votes relating to museums, national galleries, Universities, and colleges, and also the Vote in Class 7 for miscellaneous temporary commissions. On Thursday, June 11, I hope—subject to possible alteration--to take the Local Government Board Vote.

BISHOPRIC OF BRISTOL BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 10th June, and to be printed. (Bill 229.)

ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONERS BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 10th June, and to be printed. (Bill 231.)

NEW BILL.

MEDICAL ACT (1886) AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.

"To amend The Medical Act, 1886," presented by General Laurie; supported by Sir Walter Foster, Sir John Tuke, Mr. Rothschild, Sir Howard Vincent, Mr. Middlemore, and Sir Mancherjee Bhownaggree; to be read a second time upon Monday, 8th June, and to be printed. (Bill 232.)

THE SUGAR CONVENTION.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BONAR LAW, Glasgow, Blackfriars) in the absence of the President of the Board of Trade, presented a Bill to make provision for giving effect to a Convention, signed on March 5, 1902, in relation to sugar. He said: Hon. Members will remember that during last session a Resolution was passed by this House, authorising the Government to give effect to the Brussels Sugar Convention, and the object of this Bill is to carry out that Resolution. Under the terms of the Convention this country is bound either to prohibit the importation of bounty-fed sugar or to impose upon it a countervailing duty equivalent to the amount of the bounty. By this Bill powers are taken only to prohibit, but not to countervail; and therefore in the future bounty-fed sugar will stand in exactly the same position as some other articles do now—such, for instance, as foreign prison-made goods, books which infringe our copyrights, or cattle which come from countries where there is disease. I do not think any advantage would be gained now by going in detail into the provisions of this Bill. They are short and are contained in two clauses, but I will refer to only three points. Powers are taken to demand proof of origin in regard to all sugar imported; in the next place, sugar-refining is to be carried on in bond; and, thirdly, the expenses of the permanent Commission are to be met out of moneys supplied by Parliament. No doubt the principles involved in the Bill will be fully discussed, but I doubt if many new arguments will be introduced into the discussion. There is one consideration which lies at the very root of the whole matter. Last November the President of the Board of Trade quoted some words of Mr. Gladstone's, and I think they are worthy to be quoted again—

> "We do not regard with any satisfaction a system under which an artificial advantage is given in our markets to the products of foreign nations. Some people—"

Hon. Gentlemen opposite are some of those people—

> "say it is a good thing, because the consumer gets the benefit; but I do not think that any benefit founded on inequality and injustice can bring good even to the consumer."

I ask the House why is it that not only Mr. Gladstone but all the economists maintain that bounties are quite as bad for the country which receive as for the country which grant them? The reason is not difficult to find. The advantages of bounties, in the way of greater cheapness, are obvious; the disadvantages, though not less real, are not quite so obvious, and no one can tell how greatly a country suffers. I ask the House to consider the position of the sugar industry. If at the outset our markets had been closed to bounty-fed sugar, there is no reason to suppose that the consumption of sugar would not have increased as it has increased now, and as the consumption of tea has increased. But if that consumption had increased under natural conditions it would have been met by increased supplies. What would this have meant to this country? Our machine shops would have turned out more material, our workmen would have been employed in producing the sugar machinery which would have been required, our manufacturers would have furnished more material, our workmen would have produced the immense supplies required, more ships would have been engaged in carrying supplies and our workmen would have been employed in building the ships which the great increase of trade would have necessitated. There has been a great increase of trade on account of the beetroot sugar industry, but that is a trade in which this country has almost had no share whatever. No one can doubt that the absence which this immense trade has made to our country represents a loss infinitely greater than any slight advantage which has been gained by the comparative cheapness of sugar. The object of the Bill is to turn the sugar industry again into its natural channel, and at the same time to prevent the complete destruction of what has been in the past and will be again one of the most important industries in the British Empire.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make provision for giving effect to a Convention signed on the fifth day of March, nineteen hundred and two, in relation to Sugar."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*)

*MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.) was sure that the House generally regretted extremely the absence of the President of the Board of Trade, and the cause of that absence. He thought every one would agree that the hon. Member who had just spoken occupied a very appropriate position in introducing that Bill. He had made himself the apostle of protection, and the measure, though most simple in its character, would be found to embody one of the worst systems of protection ever advocated in this country. The Brussels Convention was an agreement entered into by five Powers—Germany, Austria, France, Holland and Belgium—which were sugar-producing and exporting countries. Great Britain, however, was not a sugar-producing country—it consumed sugar, and the simple object of the Convention was to raise the price of sugar. The plan of the Bill meant the prohibition of imports. The House must have listened to the hon. Member's speech with the utmost amazement. In the only debate they had had on the Convention Ministers devoted their speeches to a justification of the imposition of countervailing duties. The President of the Board of Trade, the Colonial Secretary, and the Prime Minister, in answer to many Questions put by the hon. Member for King's Lynn, all had defended that method. But in this Bill that idea was dropped — a notable triumph for the Opposition, which had declared that such duties would be illegal and impossible. This was the most extraordinary retreat on the part of the Government since the London Education Bill was under discussion. But an even worse principle than countervailing duties was introduced into this Bill—the principle of the prohibition of imports. Let the House realise what that meant to this country. There were fourteen great countries, including Russia, Denmark, Egypt, the United States, the Argentine Republic, Peru, Chili, and the Danish and Dutch colonies—all outside the Convention, which last year sent us sugar amounting to 2,000,000 cwt.; but at the bidding of a foreign Commission in Brussels we were to close our ports to these imports. The country had in past times experience of closing our ports. But under the old Corn Laws this was done to protect our own people and an important British industry—the production of corn. The new principle of protection adopted by the Government was to prevent us from receiving an article which we did not and could not produce at home, with the result that the whole of the benefit of the new policy would accrue to neighbouring Continental nations. It was the habit of hon. Members opposite to quote Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Cobden on such subjects. But they did not want to hear from the Government any more of these names. These Statesmen were no longer here; the present generation had to fight its own battles as best it could without them; and they wanted to know from the Government the exact way in which the provisions of the Bill would be enforced. Some explanations had been given, and they sounded very strange to the House. Certificates of origin, punishments for fraud and forgery, the placing of manufactories in bond, under Government supervision by night and by day—these were the old weapons taken out of the mediæval prison of protection and brought into use in this country once more to strike a deadly blow at manufactures which had grown up in the last twenty or thirty years, and to lay heavy burdens on the people. A formidable opposition would be offered to the Bill at every stage, and he firmly believed that the opposition to it would be supported by a vast majority of the people.

And, the Motion being opposed, after a brief explanatory statement from the Member who made the Motion and from a Member who opposed it, Mr. Speaker put the Question in pursuance of Standing Order No. 11.

The House divided:—Ayes, 142; Noes, 82. (Division List No. 111.)

AYES.

Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John.
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Baird, John George Alexander
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (*Manch'r*
Balfour, Kenneth R. (*Christch.*
Bathurst, Hon. Allen Benjamin
Bignold, Arthur
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Brymer, William Ernest
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cavendish, R. F. (*N. Lancs.*)
Cavendish, V. C. W. (*Derbyshire*
Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. J. (*Birm.*
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Chaplin, Right Hon. Henry
Cochrane, Hon. Thos H. A. E.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Colomb, Sir John Charles Ready
Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cranborne, Lord
Crossley, Sir Savile
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Denny, Colonel
Dewar, Sir T. R. (*Tr. Haml'ts*
Dickson, Charles Scott
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Faber, Edmund B. (*Hants, W.*
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fergusson, Rt. Hn. Sir J (*Manc'r*
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, Philip S (*Warwick, S. W.*
Fyler, John Arthur
Gibbs, Hon. Vicary (*St. Albans*)
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nairn*
Gordon, Maj. Evans (*Tr. H'ml'ts*
Goschen, Hon. George Joachim
Greene, Hy. D. (*Shrewsbury*)
Greene, W. Raymond (*Cambs*
Grenfell, William Henry
Groves, James Grimble
Hamilton, Rt Hn Lord G (*Midd'x*
Hardy, Laurence (*Kent, Ashf'd*
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Haslam, Sir Alfred S.
Hatch, Ernest Frederick G.
Heath, James (*Staffords. N. W.*)
Heaton, John Henniker
Henderson, Sir Alexander
Howard, J. (*Midd., Tott'ham*
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Jebb, Sir Richard Claverhouse
Jeffreys, Rt. Hn. Arthur Fred
Kenyon, Hn. George T. (*Denbigh*
Knowles, Lees
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*)
Lawrence, Sir Joseph (*Monm'th*)
Lee, A. H. (*Hants., Fareham*)
Lees, Sir Elliott (*Birkenhead*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long, Col. Charles W. (*Evesham*
Long, Rt Hn Walter (*Bristol, S.*)
Lowe, Francis William
Lowther, C. (*Cumb. Eskdale*)
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*)
Macdona, John Cumming
MacIver, David (*Liverpool*)
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Killop, James (*Stirlingshire*)
Maxwell, W. J H (*Dumfriesshire*
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Milvain, Thomas
Mitchell, William (*Burnley*)
More, Robt. Jasper (*Shropshire*)
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Murray, Rt Hn. A. Graham (*Bute*
Murray, Col. Wyndham (*Bath*
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Nolan, Joseph (*Louth, S.*)
O'Brien, Patrick (*Kilkenny*)
O'Malley, William
Percy, Earl
Pierpoint, Robert
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Purvis, Robert
Quilter, Sir Cuthbert
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Ratcliff, R. F.
Rattigan, Sir William Henry
Renshaw, Sir Charles Bine
Ridley, Hon. M. W. (*Stalybridge*
Ridley, S. Forde (*Bethnal Green*
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Robertson, Herbert (*Hackney*)
Robinson, Brooke
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.
Rutherford, John (*Lancashire*)
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Samuel, Harry S. (*Limehouse*)
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Smith, James Parker (*Lanarks*)
Stanley, Hon. Arthur (*Ormskirk*
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (*Oxf'd Univ.*
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Thornton, Percy M.
Valentia, Viscount
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Warde, Colonel C. E.
Webb, Col. William George
Welby, Sir Chas. G. E. (*Notts*)
Williams, Colonel R. (*Dorset*)
Wilson, John (*Glasgow*)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (*Bath*)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Worsley-Taylor, Henry Wilson
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

Mr. Lough.

NOES.

Allen, Charles P. (*Glouc., Stroud*
Asher, Alexander
Atherley-Jones, L.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Black, Alexander William
Blake, Edward
Boland, John
Brigg, John
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Campbell, John (*Armagh, S.*)
Causton, Richard Knight
Cawley, Frederick
Channing, Francis Allston
Churchill, Winston Spencer
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*)
Cremer, William Randal
Crombie, John William
Cullinan, J.
Cust, Henry John C.
Dewar, John A. (*Inverness-sh.*
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Duncan, J. Hastings
Edwards, Frank
Evans, Sir Francis H (*Maidstone*
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Fuller, J. M. F.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gore, Hn. S. F. Ormsby- (*Linc*
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon
Hayter, Rt. Hn. Sir Arthur D.
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Hutton, Alfred E. (*Morley*)
Jacoby, James Alfred
Jones, William (*Carnarv'nshire*
Labouchere, Henry
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (*Cornwall*)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leng, Sir John
Lloyd-George, David
Lowther, Rt. Hon. Jas. (*Kent*)
M'Killop, W. (*Sligo, North*)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Morgan, J. Lloyd (*Carmarthen*)
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Kelly, James (*Roscommon, N.*
Palmer, Sir Charles M (*Durham*
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pease, J. A. (*Saffron Walden*)
Pemberton, John S. G.
Perks, Robert William
Priestley, Arthur
Rea, Russell
Redmond, William (*Clare*)
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Rose, Charles Day
Runciman, Walter
Schwann, Charles E.
Stevenson, Francis S.
Sullivan, Donal
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, Abel (*Carmarthen, E.*
Vincent, Sir Edgar (*Exeter*)
Walton, Joseph (*Barnsley*)
Wason, Eugene (*Clackmannan*
Weir, James Galloway
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Williams, O. (*Merioneth*)
Woodhouse, Sir J T (*Huddersf'd*
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Lough and Mr. Gibson Bowles.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Gerald Balfour and Mr. Bonar Law.

SUGAR CONVENTION BILL.

"To make provision for giving effect to a Convention signed on the 5th day of March, 1902, in relation to Sugar," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday 8th June, and to be printed. (Bill 230.)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).

Ordered, That the Motion for the adjournment of the House for Whitsuntide have precedence this day of the Business of Supply.—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

ADJOURNMENT (WHITSUNTIDE).

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir A. ACLAND-HOOD, Somersetshire, Wellington) formally moved "That this House do now adjourn until Monday, 8th June."

FISCAL POLICY OF THE COUNTRY.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): It is, I think, impossible for the House to adjourn for the recess without some consideration of the topics which have recently been introduced as electoral topics for the consideration of the country on behalf of the Administration. They constitute a change in our fiscal policy, and indeed in the whole policy of this country, which is revolutionary and opposed to all the traditions and opinions of the overwhelming majority of this House, including, I believe, a majority of hon. Gentlemen opposite. That, surely, is a matter for the consideration of the House which ought not to be delayed. Many hon. Members would have taken an even earlier opportunity of bringing these topics to the attention of the House had it not been known that this opportunity would occur to-day. But that the House should wait until the discussion of the Finance Bill, which might not provide so good an opportunity for eliciting the exact position in which we stand, seems to me to be impossible under the circumstances. The declarations to which I allude are contained notably in three different speeches. I may have to mention speeches by the First Lord of the Treasury and the President of the Local Government Board; but the speeches to which I wish particularly to direct the attention of the House are a speech on the 15th inst., a very few important words in a speech delivered in this House on Friday, and a speech on Saturday by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade.

These three speeches form a series. I believe hon. Members who have watched the speeches of the Colonial Secretary for years did not think that the first of these speeches carried matters much farther than he carried them some years ago. Yet, that speech, read in the light of the subsequent speech of the right hon. Gentleman in this House, and the direct statement of the Secretary to the Board of Trade, receives a momentous importance, an electoral bearing, a bearing on the policy of the Government as a whole, which forces it on the attention of the House. In the second speech of the Colonial Secretary in this House, he dotted the i's of his first speech, because he stated that the enormous sum of money required for old-age pensions could not be supplied except by one means, and that means was a duty on the foreign imports of this country. I think the right hon. Gentleman will not deny that he pointed to a duty on food and raw materials. I cannot for the life of me see how, unless a duty is laid on food and raw materials, he can find from our foreign imports the amount of money he requires.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): I shall have to explain at some length to the House. All I ask the right hon. Baronet for the moment is not to quote me as committed to this, that, or any other proposition. Perhaps, I have not made myself clear. I have not the slightest objection to the right hon. Baronet quoting to any extent he likes; but he must not appeal to me to agree with his quotations.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: The main words of the right hon. Gentleman's speech in the House were that the vast sum of money required for old-age pensions was to be provided by a review of our fiscal system. My contention—which I will not father on the right hon. Gentleman—is that it is impossible to find that amount of money without imposing a duty on food and raw materials. Almost all the imports of this country consist of food and raw materials, or half manufactured materials, which, although they come in as manufactured goods, are in fact raw material. I need only allude to the boot and shoe trade, which lives on leather manufactured abroad, but which in fact is raw material. That the Colonial Secretary was thinking of some system of the kind is shown by his words in another speech, and in a letter in which he said that, in his belief, the working classes would submit to a considerable increase in the cost of living provided they got increased wages. Surely, that pointed to a duty on food and raw materials, not to a duty on luxuries. The speech of the Secretary to the Board of Trade took these speeches entirely out of the category of personal utterances or speeches only suggesting a policy for the distant future. The Secretary to the Board of Trade stated, as though by authority, that these speeches were concerted by the Government. The matter is one of first-class importance; and if the result of this debate is to prove that the impression which I have stated was incorrect, the debate will not be without good result. What the Secretary to the Board of Trade said was that the speakers struck the same note; that they struck it in complete harmony; and that he might say, what was the actual fact, that the policy expressed in these speeches was the policy which was arranged between the Statesmen who uttered it. I leave the House to draw its own conclusions. No doubt the Government will speak through authorised exponents of their views in this debate. These words were very clear, and very strong; and the importance which the first speech of the Colonial Secretary has assumed, rests on a belief, formed in our minds, and supported by all ordinary sources of information, which has not astonished us more than it has astonished a large number of hon. Gentlemen opposite.

The hon. Members who have spoken on this subject and who have adopted the policy of the Colonial Secretary do not, I think, include the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I heard with deep concern that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been called away to Aberdeen, where I know he had a very pressing engagement, but I see he has not kept it. I am very glad the right hon. Gentleman is here, because, when the Secretary of the Board of Trade, in the regrettable illness of the President of the Board of Trade, speaks as he did at Chester, it is clear that we ought to ascertain, as early as possible, whether he speaks with the authority of the Financial Department of the Government which is specially concerned, if not with the authority of the Government as a whole. This matter is not one in which it is possible for any individual Minister to assume the assent of his colleagues in so startling a change of policy as this of the Colonial Secretary, unless it has been before the Cabinet as a whole, but to judge from the words used by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he proposed the repeal of the corn tax, the feeling in the Cabinet falls altogether short of the thorough agreement which has been alluded to on the policy which has now been revealed. The Government were parties to certain early stages of this policy. The Cabinet was a party to the Colonial Conferences of 1897 and 1902. The policy of those Conferences ought to have been discussed by this House, but it never was properly discussed, and one reason for raising this matter now is the very fact that this policy has not been discussed heretofore. That policy as a whole is a dangerous policy; it was entering into a career which might or might not lead to the difficulties in which we now find ourselves. The basis of those Conferences was virtually the same. Those Conferences were called to consider defence contribution from the colonies, and after that the preference to be given by the colonies to the mother country. There was nothing about preference by us, and there is a very great distinction between the two things. I will not dwell upon it. I will merely state it in the words used by Professor Davidson of the University of New Brunswick, in his book, which is the best ever written on the subject. He is a Canadian advocate of preferential duties, but in his book he distinctly states that it is not possible for us to adopt preferential duties, that the disturbance in our trade will be so vast and overwhelming that the colonies must not expect that we should follow them. He also points out—and this is material—that it is easy for a protectionist colony to give preferential duties by raising the protectionist duties against the world and then lowering them again as against the mother country. The Conference, from the contribution point of view, was a fiasco; it did not produce the contribution which had been expected. Putting aside what has been alleged, that Australia has increased her naval contribution, and it must be borne in mind that that increase will be very small under the new conditions, which are the old conditions with worse new ones attached, the Conference of 1902, from the point of view of the defence contribution, was a fiasco, but the Conference of 1897 did produce the adoption by Canada of preferential duties in our favour. What was the statement of the right hon. Gentleman who seemed willing, as perhaps the Government were also willing, to give up our principles without obtaining a contribution, as to the effect of these preferential duties? In the report of the Colonial Conference he said the rate of increase under the preferential tariff was actually less than under the general tariff and under the free tariff. That was a pretty admission. The Secretary to the Board of Trade, who is the professional economist of the Government, and who is always turned on to give a sort of economic gloss to their heresies, knows that this is their weak point, and he tackled it courageously in the speech at Chester. The hon. Gentleman, who is a Canadian protectionist, used these words. He said—

> "He had carefully examined the figures, and he was well within the mark in saying that we did at least 20 per cent. more trade with Canada now than we would have done if that preference had not been granted."

That conflicts very strongly with the words of the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State gave the case away but the Under Secretary of State defended it. Now, it will be observed that the hon. Gentleman used a hypothesis in defending this policy. Indeed, he used the very language, and probably the figures too, of the Canadian Memorandum, which did not prevail with the Department which he represents. The Board of Trade Memorandum, on the other hand, stated that the comparison failed to show any marked effect of the preferential tariff in stimulating trade between the British Empire and the Dominion. I much regret the absence of the President of the Board of Trade, but I do think in the absence of the right hon. Gentleman we ought to have some statement from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or some member of the Ministry, as to what is the Board of Trade's present view of the subject, and whether we are justified in assuming that they adhere to the Memorandum which they laid before the Colonial Conference.

Now let us look at the policy which is to be placed before the people on the dissolution. The policy now proposed by the Secretary for the Colonies appears to be to raise a large income from duties on foreign imports, which in order to be large must include duties on food and raw materials. The Secretary to the Board of Trade does not admit that; he cautiously stated at Chester that there were difficulties about food and raw materials. I should certainly think there were, but surely it is time, when this policy is to be acclaimed from half the platforms in the country, that we should know where we stand on the question whether the millions which are to be claimed for the purpose of old-age pensions are to be got out of duties upon food. The hon. Member the Secretary to the Board of Trade is Member for Glasgow, and I feel for him. No doubt he does not want to offend powerful colleagues by one declaration or his constituents by the other, and he cannot be taken to mean anything further than his words suggest, and with regard to raw material he tried to meet the difficulty by suggesting a tax with the adoption of the principle of rebates. That would be a pretty job for this country with our gigantic industries, using raw materials part of which are foreign and part colonial. How the rebate is to be allowed I cannot conceive, but if we are to be drawn into this policy this question must be asked at once. I remember a despatch once laid before this House by a distinguished Secretary of State which related a conversation between himself and the French Ambassador on the question of free trade. The French Ambassador got very angry because he was looked upon as a protectionist, and declared that he was a life-long free-trader. "Yes, I know," said the Secretary of State, "but I have never for the life of me been able to understand the difference between a French free-trader and a British protectionist." The House can apply that resemblance here. Right hon. gentlemen think they are free-traders, but there are tests with regard to free trade, and they do not come up to those tests. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade shook his head on being accused of being a protectionist, and used these words: Alluding to the Secretary of State for the Colonies he said the right hon. Gentleman was a free-trader; then he said he—

> "Also believed in free trade, or at least he thought he believed in it."

MR. BONAR LAW: It depends on the definition of free trade.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: No doubt. The hon. Gentleman went on to give not a definition but an explanation, and this is the explanation. "He wished them to remember that in the early days of the last century our commercial supremacy was infinitely greater than it ever had been since." The hon. Gentleman evidently regretted the good old times. That was in the days "when free trade had not been thought of." I confess it had never previously entered my head that anyone could regret "the early times of the last century." The hon. Member could not mean that he regretted the days of the Great War, and therefore he must refer to the period between 1819 and 1831.

MR. BONAR LAW: At the beginning of the century.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: He regrets the Great War! I do not know whether the old country party opposition would go so far as to regret the absence of the prices which obtained during the Great War. You have to take into consideration the causes by which those prices were produced. It never entered my mind that people would regret the early part of that century, when even the loyalty of the working classes, which in all periods of trial in English history has been so extraordinary, was shaken to the point of rick-burning, bread riots, and other horrors.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): There were no duties, except a very nominal tax, on any breadstuffs at all.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: In any case, the war did the duty of a tax in keeping goods out. But it is not my argument; it is the argument of the Secretary to the Board of Trade; he regrets those days.

MR. BONAR LAW: I must really interrupt the right hon. Baronet. He says I regret the particular set of circumstances which obtained at the beginning of the last century. What I did say was an undoubted historical fact, that our trade supremacy was greater then than it has been ever since free trade was adopted.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: But circumstances which had nothing to do with his argument at the moment require consideration. It was a time when our ships had swept the sea, and the one neutral power in the world had been so bullied by us that she was obliged to go to war with us. But this is a test of free trade, and I should like to ask any defender of this policy whether that test is here possible or not. When dealing with cotton duties in India and Egypt we have insisted that there should be an excise exactly corresponding to the duties imposed. We have not heard a word about that in this case. Unless that policy is applied, pure protection must be the result of the duties. We ought to know at once where we stand on this subject. We are told there is concurrence amongst the leading members of the Government in the statements which have been made pointing to large duties on foreign imports, but those statements are hardly consistent with the action of the Government—and actions speak louder than words—in repealing the Corn Tax. The Corn Tax was repealed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in language which was guarded, no doubt, and intended to cover the views of two sets of colleagues who perhaps did not agree among themselves, but which nevertheless was free trade and not protectionist. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is the guardian of the great commercial interests of the country; he is regarded as a safe man. It is true he has a "past" concerning a certain heresy on this subject, but I am glad to welcome him as a convert of many years standing. The late Archbishop of Canterbury began by being suspected of heresy, and the whole of his clergy rose in arms against him on his elevation to the Episcopate, but he ended by being a pillar of orthodoxy in the Church. And so with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. We take him joyfully to our arms, and, as he is regarded in Threadneedle Street as a safe man, let him give us safety here. I do not wish to hold the First Lord too closely to what was perhaps an innocent slip when he spoke of the Corn Duty as a bread tax.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It was a slip.

SIR CHARLES DILKE: It was a slip? We maintain that it is a bread tax, and if this is a well considered policy, wild though we think it, it is a policy which rests essentially upon the taxation of food and raw materials.

The speech of the Secretary of State, in the light of subsequent utterances, must be regarded as the foundation of this policy, and its arguments are well worth consideration in this House. The right hon. Gentleman began, of course, by abusing the Manchester School. He said the Manchester School was dead, but he went on to say that if Cobden had been alive he would have been found on his platform. I venture to think that had Cobden been in favour of this policy it would have been only because he had lived to an excessive age and softening of the brain had set in. The right hon. Gentleman went on to attack the "dangerous policy of Home Rule," which has some connection with this subject, but not much. It reminds us of the fact that all the great white colonies of which the right hon. Gentleman was speaking are in favour of Home Rule. So that in advocating federal union with these white colonies, the right hon. Gentleman is in this curious position: he is in favour of federal union and against Home Rule, while the white colonies are in favour of Home Rule, and Australia is entirely opposed to the policy of federal union. The Colonial Secretary declared that the whole of this policy was new, and that it had to be taken up suddenly because there had arisen a condition of affairs entirely different from anything which had ever before existed in the history of the British Empire. His words were—

> "This idea of common responsibility is altogether a new one."

That is an amazing statement to come from anyone learned in the history of our colonies, especially from the Statesman at the head of the Colonial Office. The doctrine of common responsibility between ourselves and our colonies was fully recognised in the foundation of all the great colonies. It was expressly recognised in the time of Cromwell, when a proportionately larger force of colonial militia followed the British flag in foreign wars than even in the late war. It was recognised by Washington, and at the time of the siege of Louisburg,—indeed, throughout the 18th century, and it was only brought to an end, as far as the American colonies were concerned, by the tactless and rash haste with which we interfered with the fabric that had slowly been built up. The Colonial Secretary said the Empire itself is new. Why, the doctrine of the Imperial character of the British Crown is as old as the Monarchy! It has been asserted over and over again in the laws of the country; it had to do with the Reformation, and it was expressly recognised throughout Tudor times. That statement of the right hon. Gentleman led up to an astounding omission from the speech, upon which I comment because it is an omission from the entire policy which robs it of all claim to be considered as a truly Imperial policy. The Colonial Secretary said—

> "I am not going to speak to-night of those hundreds of millions of our Indian and native fellow subjects."

In the British Empire and her protectorates there are 400,000,000 people, 300,000,000 of whom are in India, but the Colonial Secretary said he would deal only with the "10,000,000 of our white fellow subjects in the self-governing colonies," who, with the 40,000,000 here, make 50,000,000 out of 400,000,000. The remaining 350,000,000 he shut out not only of his speech, which would not have been of much importance, but of the whole policy which is now being developed as regards the trade, finance, and future of the Empire. In the whole of that speech there was not the vestige of a suggestion as to how the enormous Indian problem is to be faced. If the right hon. Gentleman, instead of being Colonial Secretary for so long, had had a term of office as Secretary of State for India, and had approached this question from that side, I am sure he would have looked at it in a different way, and he would have tried to shape his policy to meet the difficulties of the case. When dealing with the fiscal policy of this country there ought always to be present to our minds the fact that India pays her share of the cost of running the Empire, while others do not. You have only to contrast what is paid per head in Ceylon with what is paid per head in Southern India to see that that is so. India has every claim to consideration, and our responsibility towards her is greater than to the self-governing colonies. The Colonial Secretary said that if this matter had been taken in time—

Sir Charles Dilke.

> "We might have laid the foundations of an Imperial edifice."

Franklin tried it, and why did his plan of federal union fail? In a letter in 1767, Franklin said it was because the colonies were indifferent, but the real fact was that New England was opposed to it, as Australia is opposed to it now. It is dangerous in the highest degree to attempt to force federal union on the colonies as long as you have the notorious fact before you that Australia is opposed to any such system. There was a debate on this subject on 3rd April, 1900, when the Colonial Secretary said that we should make no suggestions of our own upon a subject so extraordinarily delicate and dangerous. We must wait for suggestions from the colonies.

He was against all rash dealings with the question, but now he says it must be taken up at once. In the speech of the 15th he said—

> "Unless trade is dealt with . . . I do not believe in a continued union."

But there is a link of Empire which was not mentioned in that speech. Federal union is put out of the question by the opposition of Australia, but the link to which I refer is strong in Australia. If that link is all that is required by the colonies you may very well leave well alone in that respect.

The right hon. Gentleman says we ought to tempt the colonies into federal union by a trade preference. That is not a new policy. Trade preference has been tried before. Some of us still remember the last examples of trade preference. Trade preference was a gross, gigantic, and admitted failure. I would refer hon. Members to what Adam Smith says on the doctrine of trade preference, and the reason it was swept away by an indignant country. The Colonial Secretary believes that Australia is coming into line with Canada in this matter, and he said—

> "Australia has accepted the principle . . . and pledged themselves to recommend a substantial preference in favour of the goods of the Mother country."

That is an exaggeration. What the representatives of Australia pledged themselves to was a general resolution in favour of a preference "not yet defined as to nature or extent." Yesterday the Commonwealth Parliament was opened by Lord Tennyson, and he declared, in the name of the Commonwealth Ministry, that while they had agreed to these general words they were not in a position to make any proposal to Parliament upon the subject. That fact seems to me conclusively to show that it was most unwise and rash, unless done for electoral reasons, to raise this question at the present time. If we are to tempt the colonies by such duties, has anyone considered and thought out how they are to be tempted? Take the Australian colonies. They send us wool and they have a monoply of the best wool in the world. They send us half our wool supply, which is the greatest export of Australia. It is well known that we buy an equal quantity of wool from other portions of the world and largely from South America. We mix a portion of that wool and export it to all parts of the world. Under these circumstances, I cannot conceive how any such proposal will benefit the Australian colonies. On the other hand, there is the beef trade. I doubt whether any such proposal in the long run would allow Australia to compete with the producers of South America; therefore you are to tax the whole of the enormous imports of beef, consumed largely by the miners and the navvies of this country, which comes almost exclusively from South America and through Holland from the south of Europe. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, on a former occasion, faced all these difficulties himself. He faced them in the speech made on the 3rd of April, 1900, and he declared them to be insuperable. What has happened since that time? On the 3rd of April, 1900, the Secretary of State for the Colonies said—

> "He had never proposed a Zollverein."

He said—

> "It was one of those recurring mistakes of which I am so largely the victim."

and he also made this curious statement, that all that he had done was to follow Lord Ripon—a curious leader to follow, for a Minister holding views such as those which are entertained by the Secretary for the Colonies. Proceeding, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "If there is to be any kind of fiscal arrangement with the Colonies, the only form which I myself think would be viewed with the slightest favour in this country would be that of an Imperial Zollverein, in which there should be free trade between the whole Empire."

Therefore this proposal is an impossible one. In the first place, Australia will not look at it. Protection in Australia is directed against our manufactures and against India—it is directed against the cheap labour of India. I agree that if there was the slightest probability of this country being willing to consider any system of this kind it would be an Imperial Zollverein, but that would hamper our trade to a degree which few people have considered. Nothing else has the slightest chance of being considered. The people of this country are not going to raise the price of their food or put an end to their Most-Favoured-Nation treaties. The people of this country are not going to permit a monstrous injustice to be done to the people of India which this suggested policy would involve.

In conclusion, I wish to ask the House to consider for the moment how any such system would operate upon our trade. Take the case of America. We send on an average to North and South America £50,000,000 worth of British and Irish produce and manufactures, and we send a still larger amount of other things which we buy and sell. We send in an average year £20,000,000 worth of British and Irish produce and manufactures to the United

States, £22,000,000 to the Latin Republics, and £8,000,000 to our colonies. What do we receive in return? We receive the whole of our cotton. We receive also an enormous amount of grain, beef, and most of our mineral oils. We also receive an enormous proportion of half-manufactured goods used in our manufactures, such as the leather used in our boot and shoe trade. Therefore the articles mainly affected would be firstly cotton, and after that mainly food. Take the case of cotton. By interfering with our trade with America we are jeopardising our exports of £42,000,000, which is more under British influence and more under the influence of British capital than even our colonial trade. It is a curious fact that we supply many of the South American States in a higher degree than Canada, and we send five times more per head of manufactures and produce there than we do to our own colonies. Are we to interfere with such a trade? Are we to tax cotton, and if not why not? You may say that we do not grow cotton in the British Empire, but we do. I do not know whether Egypt is to be dealt with as a portion of the Empire. As my hon. friends from Manchester well know, we are getting cotton from West Africa, Queensland, Fiji and India. These attempts to produce cotton within the British Empire are increasing, but up to the present time we are producing only a mere fraction of the total amount required. Are you going to tax all our cotton for the benefit of the colonial producers? Are we to tax the food, the raw material and the half-manufactured goods? I am convinced that this policy has not been thought out, and when it is clearly put before the people of this country it will be as universally condemned as it was in the time of our grandfathers.

*THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I do not know that there is very much that I can sympathise with in the speech we have just listened to, but at least I agree with the right hon. Baronet that the present is a more convenient occasion for raising this discussion than the Second Reading of the Budget, with which the great topics brought by the right hon. Gentleman before the attention of the House have nothing to do. For my own part I rejoice that this question—if it is to be discussed at all—should be discussed at a moment in which we may leave altogether on one side the scheme of the Government for dealing with this year's finances.

There was one word which recurred at brief intervals throughout the right hon. Baronet's speech, the word "heresy," which I think is not advisedly introduced when we are dealing with scientific and political questions of the kind raised this afternoon. It indicates a tendency to go back to authority and formulæ which, at all events in the region of political economy, were originally used in conditions of society and of trade very different from those which now prevail, and whose modern use would certainly not be authorised by those who originally devised them. I would beg the House, in dealing with a problem which is essentially novel, not to wave the flags, now somewhat ragged and moth-eaten, which, either on the protectionist or free trade side, saw service under our fathers and grandfathers in the great battles fought fifty or sixty years ago.

The right hon. Baronet, in part of his speech, endeavoured to discuss in a serious spirit the very difficult problems in which we are now engaged. One part, however, was devoted to a less elevated object, and was intended apparently to make mischief between my right hon. friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies and myself. In that amiable intention I think the right hon. Gentleman will fail. May I ask the right hon. Baronet himself what course he thinks my right hon. friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies ought to have pursued in this connection after what occurred at the Colonial Conference last year? The Colonial Prime Ministers when in this country were asked to confer with the Secretary of State and with other high officers of the Government upon questions material to the Empire as a whole. The result of their labours is embodied in a Blue-book, where the following expression of opinion will be found—

> "That this Conference recognises that the principle of preferential trade between the

United Kingdom and His Majesty's Dominions beyond the seas would stimulate and facilitate mutual intercourse, and would, by promoting the development of the resources and industries of the several parts, strengthen the Empire."

Now I want to know whether, in the opinion of the right hon. Baronet, or in the opinion of the House at large, my right hon. friend who summoned that Conference, whose personal influence and whose personal genius has done so much to stimulate the feeling of common citizenship in all parts of the Empire—whether the right hon. Baronet or any other critic of my right hon. friend thinks that he ought to have allowed that Resolution of the Prime Ministers to sleep in the pages of a Blue-book, or whether he was not bound to raise the subject for the discussion and for the decision, not merely of the people of this country, but of the citizens of the Empire. I do not see that what my hon. friend has done with characteristic force and characteristic eloquence—can be the subject of complaint. What he has done he could not but do; and if in doing it he has greatly stirred the public interest, surely this is small blame to him.

Turning now from the more personal aspects of the question, I should like to ask the House to take a rather wider, and certainly a less polemic, view of the present economic position of the country than has been taken by the right hon. Baronet, or by, so far as I know, any of those who have hitherto taken part in this controversy. The right hon. Baronet has been constantly referring to the old free trade doctrines and has been constantly repeating the old free trade formulas. These doctrines and formulas were, in my judgment, sufficiently accurate within the limits of space and time to which they refer. But I would remind the House that the position of these Islands is now entirely different, not only from what it actually was in 1846, but, which is more important, is entirely different from what all the leading free-traders of that day supposed it was going to be. They prophesied that our example would induce the whole world to adopt a free trade policy, that this country would find itself a free trade nation among free trade nations, and they deduced from these premises conclusions with which I entirely agree. But then their prophecies, unfortunately, were wrong. There is in the whole world not one civilised free trade community, so far as I know, except ourselves. That may be a surprising result, and I am not going to examine how it came about, but it is the fact; and what is more, I do not think that any observer of contemporary tendencies would suggest for one instant that the policy in which every civilised community- -including our own self-governing colonies—has thus embarked, is a policy which they have shown the smallest inclination to reverse. We therefore have to look forward in future to a condition of things in which more and more there will be a wall of hostile tariffs built up against us, in which foreign nations will increasingly manipulate their own tariffs to our disadvantage, and in which we shall less and less be able to find in civilised countries a market for our manufactured goods. Take the case, for example, of a country which is in one sense highly protectionist, but which from the necessities of its situation is obliged to take a large amount of our manufactured goods—I mean Russia. The deliberate policy of the Minister of Finance in Russia is to so manipulate the tariff that gradually Russia will be what I believe, so far as its internal resources are concerned, it has it in its power to be, and what America has long aspired to be, that is, an industrially self-contained community — not seriously dependent upon importation from foreign countries. Now, Sir, if that tendency is to go on in the future as it has in the past, a time, so far as I can see, must come when the only neutral markets open to us will be countries like China and Turkey, and within the British Empire—our own protectorates, our own Crown colonies, and India. This country, therefore, if what I am stating is correct, will then be in a position in which it will be obliged to import an even greater proportion of its foodstuffs and of its raw material than at present, and will have to pay for them by exports which it will find even more difficult than at present to dispose of to advantage. Observe, I am not treating this upon the old protectionist idea, which was that it was your business, by excluding rival manufactures, to foster your own. That is not the argument I am advancing. What I am trying to point out to the House is this: that inasmuch as Britain must more and more be a manufacturing country as distinguished from an agricultural one, inasmuch as it must more and more depend upon foreign countries for its supplies of raw material and of food, inasmuch as it will have to pay for those supplies by its exports, if we are compelled by exterior tariffs, whether in our own colonies or foreign countries, to dispose of our manufactures on onerous terms, the community will suffer. The country, as a whole, will pay an immense tribute to the other countries on which it must impose its goods in order to get from them the corn and meat and raw material which of necessity it is obliged to import. I may parenthetically remark that this effect is at present disguised by the fact that we have enormous investments abroad, that we are a creditor country on a great scale, and that we get our necessary imports not merely by the export of our manufactures, but also in payment of the debt which foreign nations owe to us as investors in their funds, in their railway enterprises, and as the carriers of the world. But as far as I understand the modern tendencies of industry, there is a stream running now the other way, and that at all events, so far as the United States of America are concerned, where at one time were some of our largest and heaviest debtors, there is a movement in precisely the opposite direction to what I have described—a movement which seems to tend in the direction of making us the debtors of the United States. If this is symptomatic of a general tendency, then I say we shall be in the position of having to pay for these necessary imports on terms which will be most onerous to the country taken as a whole.

I hope it will be admitted that the argument I have been urging is neither "protectionist" nor unsound.

LORD HUGH CECIL (Greenwich): No, no.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: My noble friend thinks it is not a sound argument, but if he is as good a political economist as I take him to be, he will recognise on reflection that it has a greater value than he is at present prepared to admit. And if I have carried the House, or, at all events, some of the House, with me so far in my argument, I would ask this question—If the conditions under which our present fiscal system was introduced are admitted on all hands not to be conditions which now prevail, if these conditions never were anticipated by those who laid deep and broad the foundations of our national finance, are not the leaders of political thought in this country bound to raise the question whether the time has not come when we must abandon, as an absolute doctrine, the principle that revenue is never to be raised except for purposes of expenditure, and whether we ought not to contemplate the possibility of having to raise revenue for purposes of wider financial scope? For example, are we really in our hearts content with a position which leaves us absolutely helpless in the face of all foreign countries in regard to tariff negotiations? It may be said that this is the least bad of the possible alternatives; but that in itself it is eminently disagreeable I think will be admitted by anybody who has had to do with commercial negotiations. And I go farther, and I say, that if there is to be in reality an attempt on the part of foreign countries to declare that we are so fiscally distinct from our self-governing colonies that they are to be treated as separate nations, then, I say, we shall be forced by patriotism, by public opinion, by every regard for ourselves and our Empire to resist such a pretension even to the point of adopting retaliatory tariffs. Are we to be told that Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and India, are not parts of the British Empire, that they are to be treated as separate nations simply because we have given them fiscal independence? I quite admit that we, and we alone, so far as I know, among the nations of the world have been able to create such a thing as a self-governing colony; but is this a reason why these self-governing colonies are to be excluded from the benefits given to the colonies of less fortunate communities? I am quite sure we should never assent to such a pretension; and I am equally sure that it cannot be adequately resisted, unless we have at command some weapon by which those who endeavour to disintegrate the Empire by fiscal means may be properly met.

Well, Sir, that is one reason why we should discuss whether we may not profitably raise revenue for non-revenue purposes. But there is another, and that is, in the words of the Colonial Prime Ministers, to bind the Empire closer together. Hon. Members may say, "That is a good object, but like other good objects, you may pay too dearly for it." This is true. It is a question of price, but that the thing itself is of great value I cannot imagine anybody denying — even a leading member of the Cobden Club. The thing itself is worth getting if you can get it without paying too heavily for it. Very well, that is a thing which has got to be debated. We may well find out what it is we have to give and what it is that we want to get. The actual scheme which the Prime Ministers of the colonies desired, I believe, was that there should be a preference given to the imports from the colonies, in exchange for which they should mitigate the severity of their hostile tariffs against us. The right hon. Baronet says that the tax by which that has to be done must be either a tax on raw material or a tax on food. I cannot imagine that it would be wise in any circumstances to put a tax on the raw material on which our own manufactures depend, and I do not know that such a tax has ever been proposed by anybody. Nor can I say whether the people of this country are ready to accept the other alteration and submit to a tax on food. Of course, if they are not ready, it is impossible to carry out any large scheme such as that proposed by the Colonial Prime Ministers. I entirely agree; but you will never have a tax on food, in my opinion, accepted by the people of this country except as an integral part of a large policy on which their hearts are set. With that you can do it; without it you cannot. The idea that you can go back to the old protective days and ask the people of this country to tax their food in the interests of the farmer or the miller, I do not believe is within the region of practical politics. But if by means of a tax on food you can put the whole fiscal position, and the whole Imperial position of this country on a different and better footing, is it so certain that the working classes of the country will repudiate such a policy? Supposing that as a result of a tax upon food-stuffs — a general tax upon food-stuffs—it were possible to stop this process by which, not merely in foreign countries, but in our own colonies, there was being created, under a system of protection, an enormous number of vested manufacturing interests—supposing that it were possible by such a policy as that, not indeed to attain full free trade—that is beyond the power of any conceivable combination—but to diminish protection against our manufactures now and hereafter—is this so certain to be rejected? Remember the picture I drew just now of the future of this country if existing tendencies were permitted to go on indefinitely. If you can, by some arrangement with the colonies, check that tendency so far as they are concerned, if you can keep an open market, or a market approaching to an open market, for British manufactured goods, do not you think you might be doing something which the most rigid free trader might accept as a substantial contribution to his ideals. Would the working men of this country submit to a tax on food? Would the colonies submit to a partial reversal of their protection system? These are the two all-important questions. They cannot be answered now. They can never be answered except by public discussion and examination. And unless they can both be answered in the affirmative no such plan as that recommended by the Colonial Premiers can ever be carried out.

Mr. Speaker, I always regret the manner in which political economy is treated in this House and on public platforms. It is not treated as a science, or as a subject which people ought to approach impartially with a view to discovering what the truth is, either from theory or experience. Not at all. They find some formula in a book of authority and throw it at their opponents' heads. They bandy the old watchwords back wards and forwards they rouse old bitternesses, wholly alien, as far as I can see, to any modern question; and our controversies are apt to alternate between outworn formulæ imperfectly remembered, and modern doctrines imperfectly understood. That is not a fortunate state of things, and I should hope that one result of my right hon. friend's speech and of the debate to-day will be that the country will devote itself, not in a partisan spirit, to the consideration of the real economic position in which we stand, and the real difficulties we have to face now and in the immediate future, and the best way of meeting these difficulties.

Before I sit down may I say one word in addition on a more personal aspect of the question. My right hon. friend has been accused, as far as I understand it, of saying things in contradiction of, and inconsistent with, statements I have made; with having started a hare of his own; with having developed a policy quite irrespective of his colleagues. I think I have shown, as far as I apprehend the matter, that there is no contradiction between my right hon. friend's views and my own. I go much farther. Supposing my right hon. friend had done, what he has not done—supposing he had developed a policy of his own with which his colleagues have no sympathy. I cannot understand on what ground criticism is levelled against him. People say: "Oh, the Prime Minister made such and such a statement, and on the very same day the Colonial Secretary made a speech very different in spirit, if not in matter." They at first said that it was contradictory in substance as well as divergent in tone. They have given that up. But are my colleagues and I bound to come together, and not merely to consider how we can act together as a united Government, but also how every speech is to be made precisely with the same flavour of rhetoric? The thing is really absurd; and, speaking for myself, I will not be a party to depriving others of a liberty which I have always arrogated to myself. I remember some years ago I made more than one speech, I think, and certainly wrote more than one public letter, on the subject of University education in Ireland. Those were my own opinions. I did not bind the Government; I did not mean to bind the Government. I thought, and I still think, that great good might be done by ventilating the question. If you prevent politicians who either are or have been in high office from taking an independent line upon subjects which are not part of the immediate policy of the Government, you lose one of the most valuable methods of forming and directing the public opinion which this country possesses.

AN HON. MEMBER: That is a new idea.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Does the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton say that that is a new idea?

SIR HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) dissented.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Remember that this question is not one that this House will have to decide this session, or next session, or the session after; it is not a question that the existing House of Commons will have to decide at all. It is not a question connected with this year's Budget or with next year's. It is a question of our future fiscal policy, which requires a most careful study on its strictly scientific and economic side, and a most careful study on what I might call its Imperial and social side. How is that study to be even started on its way, how is it to be brought to any good or useful result if these official bonds are to be drawn as tight as the hon. Gentleman desires? My right hon. friend, I believe, is in absolute agreement with everything I have said to-day.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Hear, hear!

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: But supposing he was not, supposing that on this point there was a difference of opinion between us, is that a reason why either my right hon. friend or I should keep silence? I think not; and I believe it would be an enormous loss to the really formative forces of opinion in this country if you are going wholly to prevent any man in public life from that freedom of expression on matters not immediately before the country or the House, which is possessed by the least experienced of his fellow-citizens.

I have, I am aware, trespassed at considerable length on the House, and I know that some of the arguments I have adduced have been dry, and perhaps, with my imperfect power of expression, not easy to follow. But I am convinced that the trend of thought which I have ventured—in, I believe, absolute conformity with the views of my right hon. friend [Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Hear, hear!]—to develop is eminently worthy of elucidation, not merely within these walls, not indeed chiefly within these walls, but by public discussion, by the careful collection of information. Then, if public opinion ripens, if the colonies, and if the people of this country, are of opinion that we ought seriously to endeavour to put the British Empire in an economic position which would make it in any way equal to the magnificent economic position obtained by the United States, then I think we should have done well. I am certain that this scheme is practicable, but unless some other scheme having the same results can be brought to fruition,—if the British Empire is to remain as it is at present, a series of isolated economic units—it is vain for us to hope that this branch at all events of the great Anglo-Saxon race is destined to have the great industrial and political future which undoubtedly lies before the United States of America.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs): After listening very carefully to the speech of the Prime Minister I do not think any hon. Member has the slightest conception of what the policy of the Government is. The Prime Minister said something about not being responsible for the rhetoric of the Colonial Secretary. That was a very necessary disclaimer; but does he treat the speech of the Colonial Secretary merely as an exhibition of fireworks, or is it a declaration of policy on behalf of the Government? That, I think, the House of Commons is entitled to know. The Prime Minister forgets. He is not a member of a debating society. He is the Prime Minister, responsible for the Government of this country. What we want to know from him, and what we are entitled to know from him, is whether he, as Prime Minister, really means to endorse the policy of the Colonial Secretary to carry out what he calls fiscal reform in this country on the basis of preferential tariffs with the colonies. The Prime Minister said that this was a matter of discussion among leaders of thought. If he thinks it is a proper subject for a paper at the Colonial Institute, or to be dealt with in an economic review, no one would have a word to say about it. It would be on a par with such a question as whether the execution of Mary Queen of Scots was justifiable, which debating societies still discuss. But the practical question is whether this is a policy which the Prime Minister is to submit to the country. Let me remind the House of Commons that the first time it was mentioned in this House as a practical matter was by the Colonial Secretary on Friday, when he said that old-age pensions were not dead, that it was a practical matter at last. The right hon. Gentleman shakes his head. Has it ceased to be a practical matter since Friday?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I only shook my head in protest against the continual and most improper action of the hon. Gentleman in invariably misquoting his opponents.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I am in the recollection of the House as to what happened on Friday. We complained that the matter was not seriously treated, and that it was not intended to deal with it. The Colonial Secretary then said it was not dead, that it was going to be dealt with; and, not only that, but that it was going to be dealt with by the fiscal reform of this country. What does that mean if it does not mean that it is a practical matter?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I did not say what the hon. Gentleman says I did. What I said was that it could not be dealt with without a review of the fiscal policy.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I recognise at once that there is a distinction. On Friday last we understood that there was a pledge to deal with old-age pensions. We understand now that there is no pledge to deal with the question. The Colonial Secretary now says that if it is to be dealt with in the remote future, it can only be dealt with by a scheme of preferential tariffs. That is a different matter; but we are entitled to know from some representative of the Government whether it is to be merely a matter of debate or discussion on platforms, or whether the Government are going to deal with it before they go out.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not know about going out; but we will not deal with it before the dissolution.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: It is not to be dealt with before the dissolution. I am afraid that does not carry us much further. But the Prime Minister has not told us whether this is the policy which the Government is to submit to the country. That is the important matter after all. I agree it is a matter to be discussed thoroughly; but how can it be discussed unless the Government submit a definite proposal? We are told we are to have a preferential tariff with the colonies. We get practically nothing from the colonies except raw material and food. Raw material the right hon. Gentleman will not tax; therefore, there remains only food. When we pressed him whether he was for or against the taxation of food, he indulged in vague generalities, which showed that he had it in his mind that food would eventually be taxed. If that was the case is it not fair that the country should know? What do we get from Canada? We get timber, cheese, butter, cattle and wheat. Are we to tax corn? But the right hon. Gentleman has abandoned that. He is blowing hot and cold. Is the right hon. Gentleman going to put a tax on cattle? I was very glad to hear the speech of the Secretary to the Board of Trade. According to him, cheap food is to be put in the same category as indecent literature.

MR. BONAR LAW: The hon. Gentleman is mistaken. It is not a question of decency, it is a question of literature which invades British copyright.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Very well. I should like to know whether it is to be applied to foreign cattle, corn and lumber. Lumber is very important to Canada. Is timber from Sweden and the United States to be taxed? We are entitled to know all these things. It is not a question of talking generally about the Empire. Whenever we come to particulars, we are always told something about the basis of the Empire. Well, we are all for the Empire, certainly. I should like to know who is against the Empire. We may have different views as to the best method of administering the Empire, as we have about education, theology and religion. We may have different views as to religion; but that does not mean that we are irreligious. The same thing applies to the Empire. The Colonial Secretary from time to time has been the instructor of the House on the question of free trade. Twenty years ago, curiously enough, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer—when the Colonial Secretary was holding a different office, and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer was the President of the Board of Trade,—introduced a Motion which rather savoured of protection. He was answered by the present Colonial Secretary, who made a most persuasive speech and converted the right hon. Gentlemen the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the principles of free trade to such an extent that he has been a fairly good and respectable free-trader ever since. It is rather hard on him that he should be lured back into his evil ways by the very missionary who was responsible for his conversion. There are one or two passages in that speech to which I should like to refer. The right hon. Gentleman in that speech spoke of—

> "The new doctrines, fair trade, reciprocity, and retaliation, of which we have heard so much and know so little, and with respect to which we are naturally anxious to have accurate and definite information."

That was a reasonable position for the right hon. Gentleman to take up, and that is the very reasonable request which we now address by way of the Colonial Secretary to the Prime Minister. The right hon. Gentleman proceeded to use words which had so strong a bearing on the present position that I must ask leave to quote them, not by way of scoring off the Colonial Secretary but because they so well express our own views in regard to the matter under discussion—

> "I had hoped, in view of this debate, that at last we should be able to grasp the phantom which has so long eluded us. But I confess that these expectations have been disappointed, and that even now, after having listened attentively to everything that has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman's side of the House, I am still in the dark as to what they mean, and as to whether they understand their own meaning themselves. It is gratifying, no doubt, to be assured, as we have been by all of them, that they are opposed to protection and in favour of real free trade. But it is difficult for a plain man to reconcile these assurances with the other statements which they have made. We have had expounded to-night several shades in the new heterodoxy, which seems at last to have secured the patronage of the Conservative Party."

The Prime Minister objects to the word heresy which was used by the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean. I give up the word "heresy" and adopt the word of the right hon. Gentleman, "heterodoxy." Who would have thought that twenty years later the patron saint of the Conservative Party would have been the right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary? Nothing could be better as a reply to the Government than a reprint of this speech against the Colonial Secretary's present proposals.

We have had simply vague words and suggestions, and even now the Prime Minister does not tell us what he proposes to do. The right hon. Gentleman talks about a "tendency," and a "contingency," and it is upon words of that kind that he proposes to recast the whole of our fiscal system. Take the case of Germany, our most formidable competitor in Europe. From 1897 to 1900 our trade had increased from £32,000,000 to £38,000,000, and the same may be said with regard to the United States of America. It has been said that it is our business to follow the example of the United States, but does not the Prime Minister know that the trade per head of the population, great as it is, is as nothing compared with the trade per head of the white population of the British Empire. The Prime Minister also forgets another thing, and that is our great shipping trade. It is perfectly true that in the case of France if we show a balance sheet of the imports and exports we seem to be losing money, but 43 per cent. of the tonnage of that trade is carried in British bottoms. We do the carrying trade of the world. Then something was said about Argentina, but nothing more astonished me when I was over there than the fact that the whole country is run by British capital. Great Britain dominates everything and everything is run by British capital and British managers. It is perfectly true that the Germans are selling cheap goods to the Argentine, but they are beginning to understand that if they want good articles they must go to the British firms for them. Instead of depending on these quack remedies, which may catch the unwary, which may appeal to people who are not leaders of thought; instead of misleading them, and perhaps eventually inducing them to bring pressure to bear on Governments to interfere with a system which has produced the greatest trade the world has ever seen, it is time the Prime Minister exercised his responsibility and influence to point out the folly and danger of pursuing a policy of that kind.

LORD HUGH CECIL (Greenwich): I do not wish to detain the House more than a few moments. I wish to express my very great gratitude to my right hon. friend the First Lord of the Treasury, not only for his exceedingly interesting speech, but also for the still more interesting interruption which he made to the hon. Gentleman opposite when he assured the House that there would be no change in the policy of the Government before the dissolution of Parliament. That certainly removed from the minds of many supporters of the Government a great weight. I cordially agreed with what my right hon. friend said, that nothing could be more narrow-minded than to say that fiscal questions connected with revenue and with import and export duties, questions which we ordinarily call free trade and protection, are to be shut out any more than any other subject from perfectly free discussion. At the same time one cannot help feeling that in the distinction my right hon. friend made there is need of a warning. A heresy is not the same thing as a breach of a scientific law. For many practical purposes a breach of a scientific law is a much more awkward thing than a heresy. It is precisely because I believe that the fundamental propositions which were laid down fifty years ago were propositions of a scientific character, and had relation to abiding principles lying in human nature, and were not, therefore, of a temporary application, that I am so glad to learn that no propositions were to be laid before the House which were alien to those principles. I do not agree with my right hon. friend's interesting observation about the danger of our being shut out altogether from foreign markets, and for this reason. It is obvious that, if there are to be imports into this country, those imports are not for our convenience and benefit alone, but also for the convenience and benefit of the foreign producer. And it is quite clear that if there are to be great imports into this country of many valuable commodities, it can only be, if the mechanism of prices so adjusts itself, that there may be a corresponding amount of exports to the countries which send those goods to us. The conception that foreigners can derive the benefit of a closed market in which they can sell their goods at any value they like, and also can have the enjoyment of our market, is a profound error; and if my right hon. friend would give his attention to the subject he would see that that is not an argument that he can maintain. But I did not rise at the present moment to go into this discussion. I quite recognise that we have before us a period of discussion of a very interesting character relating to matters of political economy. I have no doubt that that matter will be argued on the one side and on the other, and I fully understand what my right hon. friend said, that Members of the Unionist Party, without any question of loyalty being involved, will be at perfect liberty to take the one side or the other.

But we have to have regard, not only to fiscal, but also to political matters; to the economical necessities of this country as well as to the political benefits of the whole Empire. I feel very strongly, when we have regard to the political side of the question, how strong the case is against altering the present fiscal system. I am unable to understand how we can adjust an elaborate system of tariffs, ostensibly for the benefit of our colonies, without involving ourselves in a series of the most angry and difficult negotiations, which, so far from strengthening the bond which unites us now to our brethren across the seas, would tend to throw the apple of discord amongst us, and therefore, from the political not less than from the fiscal point of view, would be a profound mistake. Let me say that I join most heartily in desiring to see the colonies drawn more closely to the mother country, and I resent as warmly as any human being can resent, the attitude which the German Government have adopted in regard to Canadian preferential duties. We do not for a moment range ourselves on the side of the hon. Member for the Carnarvon Boroughs, whose zeal for the Empire is less only than his zeal for Church schools. We remember, with heartfelt gratitude, the sacrifices and the loyalty of the colonies in the late war. Indeed, loyalty is hardly the phrase. We do not speak of Devonshire or Cornwall as being loyal, and the time is past, I hope, in which it is necessary to speak of Canada or Australia as being loyal to this country. We are united by the warmest bonds of attachment, and I hope we may long remain so. But I do not believe, and history goes to disprove the theory, that a fiscal arrangement should precede a political arrangement. On the contrary, I believe that a political arrangement ought to precede any fiscal arrangement that may be possible. Personally, I cannot conceive of any fiscal arrangement which it would be wise and proper to extend to the whole Empire except that system of free trade which has been so beneficial to the United Kingdom. I am sure the statesmen of Canada and Australia are most profoundly mistaken; they are under the influence of industries which have grown up under a protectionist system; they are leading their great communities along a false path, and the mother country cannot do them a greater service than that of constantly reminding them that our abundant prosperity arises out of a wise fiscal system. But whatever the fiscal system may be, political unity is the first question, and though it is exceedingly difficult—difficult by reason of geographical considerations, and also by reason of the peculiar character of the British Constitution—the organ of Government is so diffused, its whereabouts is really so uncertain, nobody knows whether it is in the House of Commons, in the Cabinet, in the Crown, or in the House of Lords—but though it is so exceedingly difficult to amend the Constitution by bringing in colonial representatives or by any other arrangement, nevertheless it is to that side of the problem rather than the fiscal side we ought to direct our minds. If it is a question of sentiment, if fiscal union is supposed to be a valuable method of fostering warm sentiments between the mother country and the colonies, or between the colonies and the mother country, it is superfluous, because those sentiments could not be warmer than they are to-day. If all that was wanted was that we should be sincerely attached to our colonies, and that our colonies should be sincerely attached to us, federal union would be achieved tomorrow.

With regard to the very real grievance which Canada may feel against Germany, I cannot help thinking that there are many ways besides fiscal measures of expressing our resentment at any ill-treatment to which our colonies may be subjected. I think there may be opportunities in the diplomatic sphere. The friendship of this country is an asset, and foreign statesmen ought to understand that that friendship cannot be more profoundly alienated than by wrong done or insult offered to any of our colonies, or more effectually conciliated than by those colonies being treated in a manner which we believe to be fair and right. We ought to resent, and the British people do resent, anything in the nature of a slight upon Canada or Australia more deeply than they would resent a slight upon themselves. The feeling towards the colonies which now animates the British people is of so warm a character that every foreign statesman ought to bear in mind that we should resent anything done against our kinsmen across the sea not less, but more than we resent anything done against ourselves. We are not, politically speaking, an ephemeral people. In 1884–5 Khartoum fell. It made a profound impression at the time, but the impression appeared to pass away. Nobody spoke of the loss we had sustained or the ignominy we had undergone. But after the battle of Omdurman it was seen how profound an impression had been made; there was an astonishing outburst of public feeling, and it was understood how grateful the British people can be to have an opportunity of wiping out old grievances and paying off old scores. The same was true with regard to South Africa. Twenty years elapsed between the wrong done and the war, but it was not forgotten, and experienced politicians were amazed at the depth of feeling that was elicited when the opportunity came to wipe out that grievance. As it was in these matters, so it will be in respect of any wrong or insult which foreign nations may do or offer to our colonies. Ten years hence it will not be forgotten. Supposing there be a Continental crisis or some occasion on which the friendship of this country is of importance to Germany, it will not be forgotten if Germany has not treated one of our colonies as we consider it ought to have been treated. These considerations cannot be publicly stated by Ministers of the Crown, but they can and ought to be brought home to the minds of statesmen on the Continent, and I cannot but believe that, without any question of fiscal re-adjustment, they will suffice to protect us and our colonies against what we consider to be ill-treatment.

In discussing this question let us on all sides speak our minds without heat and with perfect frankness and candour. Let those of us who sit on this side, who are members of a great historic constitutional Party, not be afraid to utter the beliefs we have long held, which the Party to which we belong have entertained for fifty years, and which we have been accustomed to associate—and which all the evidence goes to justify us in associating—with the abounding prosperity of our country. Let us speak our minds frankly, and urge our view, whether it be a right or a wrong view, at every opportunity that may offer, and just as the Finance Bill, which I think a great majority of the Party will support with unfaltering voice and step when it is brought before us, is in perfect conformity, as the Budgets of the last fifty years have been, with that fiscal theory which we are accustomed to call free trade, so I hope the Budgets for fifty years to come may in the same way conform to what has done so much good to the country, and is, I am persuaded, for the truest Imperial interests of the future.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I think we must all have felt that there is a certain unreality about this debate, because it is being carried on in the prospect and expectation of a still greater debate. Notice has been given on behalf of the Party opposite, and on behalf of the Leaders of that Party, for a discussion on this identical subject, to take place on the Second Reading of the Finance Bill. Therefore, I suppose we must assume that the present is only an affair of scouts, and that hon. Gentlemen on the other side who have addressed us hitherto have been acting on behalf of the Leaders of the Party, as spies in a sort of military reconnaissance. [OPPOSITION Cries of "No!"] Yes, spies—I use the word only in a military sense—as part of a reconnaissance to find out what are the weak points in our position. That, as I say, prevents this debate from assuming the importance which the subject demands. But for my part, I should not think it wasted if it had only produced the speech to which we have just listened—the very interesting and very moderate, and very suggestive speech of my noble friend the Member for Greenwich. I would like to make one or two remarks about that speech. I think my noble friend has fallen into the error, which seems to me to have been the mistake made by everybody who has spoken in this debate except the Prime Minister, of supposing that a new policy has been proposed to the country, involving at a stroke an entire and absolute reversal of the whole of the fiscal policy of this country. I am absolutely unaware of any such proposal having been made either by myself or by anybody else; and before I sit down I will show how very much more limited is the suggestion which not for the first time, but on several occasions during the last five or six years, I have put before the country. A second statement of my noble friend was to the effect that we were not hastily to deal with the fundamental propositions of that great historic doctrine which, in his judgment, had in its practical application done so much for the prosperity of the country—the doctrine of free trade. But my noble friend failed, as every one else has failed, to tell us what he means by free trade. It is perfectly clear that everything depends on the definition. We may quarrel to the end of time unless in the first instance we come to some sort of conclusion as to our terminology. I have always understood that the definition on which Mr. Cobden himself relied was that free trade was to bring about the free interchange of commodities at their natural prices. With regard to the definition given by my noble friend, it will not be interfered with by me nor, I think, by any of my right hon. friends on this side of the House. We are perfectly content to accept interchange of commodities at their natural price, and I think we may go further with regard to that definition and its strict application. But in our opinion there are certain deviations from this doctrine of free trade which we say necessitate the careful and, in a sense, the immediate attention of the country and of this House.

My noble friend, in appealing to the Party behind him, alluded very naturally and rightly to what he called the traditions of the historic Party with which he is connected, and sought to identify the Conservative Party with the doctrines of free trade. I do not know that that could be wholly sustained, though no doubt Sir Robert Peel claimed to be a Conservative when he introduced free trade. But, at all events, my noble friend was justified in saying that, for a very long period—more than a generation—that fundamental doctrine has been adopted by the Party to which he belongs. That is not inconsistent with anything I have said in the speech which has formed the text of this debate, and which it has been to me somewhat of a surprise to find has aroused exceptional attention. There is nothing in it except the rhetoric to which the hon. Member for Carnarvon alluded so gracefully, which no doubt differs in his case and mine and other orators—with the exception of the difference in rhetoric there is nothing in it which was not precisely the same as the speeches which have been delivered on more than one occasion by the late Prime Minister, calling attention to exactly the same dangers for which I ask consideration. Nor does it differ from the speeches made by my right hon. friend the Prime Minister in reply to the deputation which waited upon him in the Albert Hall in reference to the Corn Duty. Nor does it differ from the speeches that I have made myself on the subject for the last four or five years. However, I find that this greater interest is caused by an *obiter dictum* of mine to the effect that it was quite possible that the issue at the next General Election would not be the issue that some hon. Gentlemen have anticipated, but that it may be in connection with this very great and, in my opinion, more important subject. What does the Opposition want to get out of this debate? If I am to judge from the speeches made, they want to know whether the Prime Minister and myself are in sharp disagreement. They have had the answer, and I do not know whether it is at all what they expected. I wish, however, to say in order that there may be no mistake as to my part in the matter, that I agree with every single word that fell from my right hon. friend. As far as I know there is no difference whatever of principle between us in reference to this question. Well, the hon. Member for Carnarvon, in a speech which really would have been humorous if it had been a little more good-natured, asked whether this subject was to be discussed as a debating society matter, and he made a humorous allusion to the Colonial Institute and other associations which discuss questions which are not in any sense immediately practical or in regard to which theories have to be considered. I answer that question in the negative. I do not think that a discussion to which we invite the House and the country is a debating society discussion. It is much too serious a matter for that, as the hon. Member will yet find out. It will not lend itself to the very light treatment which he has given it. Although nothing has been suggested in the nature of an entire reversal of the fiscal policy of this country, yet undoubtedly there will have to be a new mandate given to the Government if the suggestions which I have thrown out are to be carried into practical effect; and that new mandate will involve many considerations of the utmost importance, affecting not merely the prosperity of the country, not merely the general question of the wealth of the country, but going deep into the condition of the working classes and their interests. And therefore, I do hope that in the great debate we are anticipating the subject will be treated as my noble friend has treated it, with all the seriousness which it deserves. The hon. Member for Carnarvon wishes to know whether the question will be raised at the dissolution. Sufficient unto the day. In the meantime he, as well as others, will have to discuss the subject in the country. In regard to that, as far as I am concerned, I will do everything which my limited power will permit to bring the question in all its bearings before the people of this country.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): What question?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I do not in the least object to the curiosity of the hon. Member, but he need not be in such a hurry. In the course of the debate somebody asked for a plan. If by "a plan" he means a detailed scheme of some new tariff or some new fiscal arrangement or reciprocity treaty, nothing of the kind can be produced at the present moment; and that is not the question I have raised, or which has been raised by the late or the present Prime Minister. What we raise in effect is a principle. It is a question which we put to the people in this country. In my speech, if I may be permitted to refer to it, I called attention in the first place to what I considered the opportunity existing at the present time, and the importance of seizing the opportunity of making preferential arrangements in the nature of a reciprocity agreement with our colonies. [AN HON. MEMBER: At the present time?] Yes, but that does not mean this week. And, in the second place, I called attention to the fact that under our existing system we are helpless and totally impotent to bring any influence to bear on foreign countries if they attack our colonies, or if they attack us in any manner which we consider would be unfair or would seriously endanger our industries. As long as we can only say to them, as we did in 1902 to the Colonial Premiers, that what you propose is against the fiscal system of this country, so long we have no weapon in our hands and we cannot meet the attacks upon our colonies or the attacks upon ourselves, which are already serious and which may become much more serious. Now these are the two points which I have brought before the country; and the question which I asked and on which I invited discussion was, "Are you determined to maintain your interpretation of free trade with such severity that you refuse to give us power to meet these cases?" If so—if that is the answer of the country—then let us announce that answer to our colonies; for nothing could be worse than to leave them in doubt. Let us say then, to our colonies, "No matter what you are prepared to do for us, no matter how much consideration you will give to our produce, no matter how largely you are prepared to approach free trade between the different parts of the British Empire, it is no use your coming to us asking for anything in the nature of return because our fiscal system, strictly determined by the mandate of the constituencies will not allow us to give you anything." In the second place, we might say, "If you want to do any service to us which is likely to arouse any kind of animosity or opposition on the part of a foreign country, we are bound to tell you that we cannot help you. There is nothing that we can do to bring that foreign country to its bearings, and to secure the defence of your interests."

My noble friend said, in very eloquent terms, that no one would resent, or does resent, more than he does the action which has been taken by Germany in regard to the case of Canada. Let me point out—and I regret if there should be any invidious reference to Germany—but I am obliged to refer to Germany, as Germany is the only country which has taken hostile notice of these preferential arrangements with Canada. Neither France, nor Russia, nor the United States have taken objection, but Germany alone has penalised Canada to the extent of a very large additional duty. Why? Because Canada has freely and voluntarily given to English products this preferential treatment. My noble friend thinks, apparently, it is sufficient to say that we are a people who remember for a long period, and that some day or other we shall catch Germany in a hole. That is essentially my noble friend's remarks. That may be very good; but does he think that Canada is likely to be satisfied with that? What has happened? Canada gave us this preference five years ago, and for five years she has been penalised. We have been bearing hot resentment in our bosom. Much good that does to Canada; and we are to go on bearing it for the time which elapsed between the death of Gordon and the final conquest of the Soudan. Whatever else that may be, it is not business. Supposing that we had, in consequence of the decision of the people of this country, to make that statement to our colonies (of course all these would be matters to be presented to the people), I could prophesy and I could express my opinion, but I cannot ask anyone to accept it who does not place confidence in my judgment in such matters. It is my honest opinion, which I felt bound to bring to the notice of the country, that if you make that reply to your colonies you must, in the first place, give up all hope whatever of anything in the nature of closer fiscal relations with them; and, in the second place, in the absence of that closer fiscal relationship you must abandon all idea of securing closer political relationship. If you have neither closer fiscal relationship nor closer political relationship, then I continue of the same opinion which I expressed at Birmingham — that a united Empire will be beyond the bounds of possibility. It is because it is of immense importance that I ask the House to join eagerly in the discussion to which I invite them. My noble friend says that he does not see that it would be advisable to commence progress towards a closer union with the colonies by taking the fiscal union first. Well, all I can say is that the great example of the world is altogether opposed to the conclusion of my noble friend. How was the union of Germany effected? The union of Germany was effected in the first instance by a Zollverein. [Cries of "No, no."] I maintain that position. At all events that is my opinion. It could not have been achieved without a Zollverein. Of course the processes of blood and iron have contributed, and are contributing, to weld it together. These are not processes which I suppose my noble friend would suggest to use in the case of our self-governing colonies.

LORD HUGH CECIL: What about England and Scotland?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I am prepared to admit that case, but I consider that it is irrelevant to my argument. Now I have said that this matter must come before the people of this country, and they will have to give an answer. They will give an answer, I am perfectly certain, for or against in no mistakeable terms. Hon. Members opposite think the answer will be given in opposition to any change, and that therefore the raising of this question will be to them of great advantage. Under these circumstances I am sure they will be grateful to me for the service I have rendered to them. All I can say is that I will make no electoral prophecy at the present time, but I can say that I have generally found the prophecies of the other side to be wrong. Therefore I do not contradict them or set up any alternative prophecy. I am bound to consider the possibility, at any rate, that the views of the nation may be in favour of some such change as is the subject of this discussion. Now in that event when we have got a mandate then will be time to produce the plan. Everybody knows that a plan in the sense of a definite and complete scheme is absolutely impossible until we know a great deal of the matters into which we have still to inquire, and into which we cannot inquire profitably or advantageously unless we know that we have got the country behind us.

Suppose we have the authority of the nation to enter on the consideration of the subject, the first thing we have to do is to go to the colonies. Now, nothing would be worse than to negotiate with the colonies, and probably come to an agreement, and then at the next general election find that the whole idea was repudiated by the country. I can conceive nothing more dangerous to union than that. Therefore, before we begin to negotiate with the colonies, we must have some knowledge of what is the opinion of the people of the country with regard to the principle at stake. Now, the first thing I should do if we get a mandate to carry it out would be to consult the colonies. In that case I should call another conference, representative of the self-governing colonies, and I have not the slightest doubt myself that, as the result, arrangements which we should consider were perfectly fair between the two parties—arrangements, that is to say, which gave us as much as we gave them—could be completed with all the colonies. [Cries of dissent.] That is my opinion, and against that let the House set the opinion of the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean. I do not know what ground he has for pronouncing beforehand the opinion of Australia as a whole. It is a very difficult thing for him or for me to anticipate beforehand what will be its opinion. I am quite sure that everything will depend upon what we have to offer. It is perfectly certain that we have something to offer them. For instance, the hon. Baronet suggested that we should offer them a preference on wool, and he pointed out that that would not be of the slightest advantage to them. Assuming for the sake of argument that his statement is correct, does he imagine that we should be such fools as to offer the Australian colonies something that would be of no advantage to them, and expect them in return to alter their system and to give up protection in our favour. All this must be a matter of negotiation. My noble friend says, without doubt or hesitation, that if you are going to make these treaties of commerce with the colonies irritation will arise, and that he can conceive nothing more likely to promote disunion. That is an argument against any treaty at all. We must never try to make a treaty with any country, not even with our own children, for fear that in the course of the negotiations we may fail to come to an agreement and that the position may be worse than before. Surely, at least, we may assume as between people of the same race and blood we should begin the negotiations with the most friendly feelings towards one another; and surely we may assume that we shall be able to come to a satisfactory agreement, or at all events to part as good friends as when we met. I see no difficulty in entering on such negotiations. I should not have the slightest fear of any danger arising from them.

Then there is another thing which we have got to find out. In order that a conference of this kind may thoroughly discuss the matter we must know from our own people not only what they can give but what they want in return. I want to know from every manufacturing district in this country, and I hope I shall learn before long—for I see the Chambers of Commerce are everywhere taking the matter up, and they will give us their assistance in arriving at a conclusion—what particular article or articles of manufacture produced in the district could be much more largely sold if preferential rates were given by the colonies, and also to what extent these preferential rates should go in order to give a substantial advantage. The House will see that all this will necessarily take time, and the claim of hon. Gentlemen opposite that we should, without this information and before we get anything in the nature of an expression of general agreement from the people of this country, put a plan before the House in the shape of a series of draft agreements with all the colonies seems to me to be the height of absurdity, and it would be absolutely impossible to agree to it.

MR. LOUGH: The right hon. Gentleman should tell us his plan.

MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL (Oldham): The right hon. Gentleman invites us to discuss this matter. How can we discuss the question unless we know, at any rate, the outlines of his scheme.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I have shown to the House pretty clearly I think that nothing in the nature of a complete plan can be put before the country. But it does not require much acumen to see what are the general lines which any arrangement of this kind must follow. [OPPOSITION cries, "What are they?"] It is hardly necessary for me to explain them, but I will for the benefit of the hon. Member for West Islington who has not been able to gather them for himself. I have said that I conceive it to be possible—I will put it no higher than that—to make preferential arrangements with the colonies which would be beneficial to both sides. But if there is reciprocal preference it is clear that we must have not only something to receive, but something to give. It is clear, also, that what we have to give must be given on some great product of the colony, and as the hon. Member for Carnarvon with greater perspicacity than the hon. Member for West Islington has perceived the preference must be given either on raw material, or on food, or on both. That is pretty simple I should have thought. I will go a step further. When the hon. Member for Carnarvon attributed certain statements to me I was compelled to say I did not accept his quotations as correct. He said that I was in favour of taxing raw materials and food. Of course the hon. Member had no right whatever from anything I have said to say anything of that sort. In my opinion—and this is only a personal opinion and do not let me be told afterwards that I am now laying down some law of the Medes and Persians, that is never to be altered and by which I am in future to be governed, because as I have said these inquiries are to be instituted which may throw further light on the subject. I quite understand that the allusion to further light on the subject is one which hon. Gentlemen opposite will be glad to make light of.

MR. LAWSON WALTON (Leeds, S.): Did not the Prime Minister tell us that it was not proposed to levy any impost either on raw materials or on food?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Certainly not.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: No. the Prime Minister did not say that. What I was going to say when I was stopped is that without binding myself for all time—[OPPOSITION laughter.] I must say this is extremely discourteous. I say that without binding myself for all time or without shutting my eyes to possible further fresh information, so far as I can see, it will not be necessary to put any tax at all on raw material, and that for obvious reasons. It will be very difficult to choose the raw materials which would be suitable to this purpose. If a tax were put on raw materials it would have to be accompanied by drawbacks on the finished exports, and although that is not at all impossible it would be a complicated way of dealing with a matter which could be dealt with much more simply. Therefore, we come to this. If you are to give a preference to the Colonies—I do not say that you are—you must put a tax on food. [OPPOSITION Cheers.] I make hon. Gentlemen opposite a present of that. I am prepared to go into any workman's house, or any labourer's house, or to address meetings of workmen or labourers, and taking certain hypothetical calculations—for instance that there was to be 1s. or 2s. put on corn, and making assumptions of that kind, I am prepared to say to them, "Now this policy if it is carried out will cost you so much a week more than you are paying at present for your food." I set aside altogether any economical question as to whether they would or would not have to pay the whole of the duty that might be imposed. "I will assume for the sake of my argument that you pay every penny of the duty, and, having assumed that, I will tell you what the cost will be. I know how many loaves you consume; I know how much meat you eat; I know what you take of this, that, and the other on which it may be proposed to put a duty, and I will give you a table from which you can tell for yourself how much extra wages you must get in order to cover the extra expense of living." And that is the argument to which hon. Gentlemen opposite will have to give their serious attention. If they can show that the whole of this business will mean greater cost of living to the working men and no increase of income, well, Sir, I have not the least doubt whatever that all their most optimistic prophecies will come true. But if I can show that in return for what I ask I will give more than I take, then, poorly as they may think of my judgment, I may still have a chance.

That also suggests another inference that has been made by hon. Members opposite. Suppose you put a duty, not for the purpose of protection—not at all—but for the purpose of gaining these advantages—having something to give to your colonies—suppose you put a duty on these products, I suppose it will produce a very large revenue. We do not want that revenue for the normal expenditure of the country, therefore we shall have a large sum at our disposal. Then to whom shall we give that sum? In the first place, I ask who is going to pay the tax? The working classes are going to pay three-fourths of it, because it is the calculation that in all taxes on consumption the poorer classes pay three-fourths and the well-to-do one-fourth. But the argument would be the same for any other proportion. That being so, according to my mind it is a matter of common justice that the working classes are entitled to every penny of the three-fourths; and I would give them without the slightest hesitation the other one-fourth as well, because I have always held—it has always been part of my speeches on this subject of social reform—that while it would be absolute confiscation to put the cost of social reform wholly on the shoulders of one class, and that the richer class, the minority, yet on the other hand it is fair and right that they should make a contribution in return for the indirect advantages they gain from the great prosperity and contentment of the country. Therefore I should consider that any Government which imposed these duties—in addition to all the collateral advantages to which I have referred—would have a very large sum of money at their disposal, which they ought to and must devote to social reform. That led me to say the other day that old-age pensions or anything else which cost large sums of money, which have hitherto seemed to me to be out of reach of immediate practical politics, would become practicable if this policy were carried out. That is another argument which hon. Gentlemen opposite will have to meet. When I am talking to a working man and asking him to compare advantages and disadvantages, another argument—I tell it you in anticipation—will be, "Not only will you get back any benefits intended entirely and alone for you, but the whole sum you have paid you will get, in addition to the whole of what is paid by the richer classes." That may or may not have any influence on the controversy; but, at all events, the working man, in addition to any direct advantages he may get through increased trade and increased wages, will be enabled to press on the attention of this House a good number of social reforms, which at present cannot be considered with any advantage.

This is a very large subject. I have said that this tax is not intentionally protective; but I do not want to deny for a moment that incidentally, and so far as it goes, it is protective. That is to say, you cannot put a duty on corn beyond a certain amount. I am getting into economics again. I know that some people contest very strongly how much of a duty is protective or not; but still, I should say it would be generally admitted that, if you were to put a considerable duty on corn, that would be to a certain extent protection for the farmer. Although that is not the intention, I admit that it must be the consequence of the tax. And that will also justify some argument; but it will not be in any case an unmixed evil. There is no doubt whatever that the state of agriculture has been, and is, a very serious question for this country. The continued reduction of our home food supply is a matter which has been found of so much importance as to justify the appointment of a Special Commission; and it is perfectly clear that anything which increases our home food supply would have some advantages which might be set against any disadvantages which accompany protection on articles of food. That is really all I have to say in regard to so much of my speech as referred to the prospect or possibility of preferential rates with our colonies. But there is the second question. How are we to defend our colonies? How are we to operate in the case of Germany, for instance? What have we to say to Germany? We have already made representation after representation to the German Government with reference to the case of Canada, and that Government has not felt itself able to do anything. And I do not see how the German Government can until the German people find out that they cannot wreak vengeance upon Canada without suffering to some extent in their own pocket. But there, again, do not let my noble friend go off with the idea that if I had a mandate to deal with this question I would go to Germany and clap on a big duty on every German product, and make this a protected country to the extent of every import Germany sent here. Not at all. I should go to Germany as a negotiator, and say to her, "If you cannot meet us in this, I am afraid I shall have to put a duty on that." It would not be necessary to affect the whole trade with Germany, or anything like it; and, of course, I should have to consider where I could put these duties with least danger to ourselves, and to bring home most effectively to the German mind the impolicy of their conduct towards Canada.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): You could refuse to collect Germany's debts for the future.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I would remind the hon. Member that Ireland, his own country, has suffered perhaps even more serious injury than England. It has been the commonplace of Irish orators, especially of the Nationalist Party, to say that it was the brutal violence and oppression of this country which imposed free trade upon Ireland, and which, therefore, has caused the destruction of agriculture in Ireland. While England, as a great commercial and industrial country, has benefited, Ireland has suffered out of all proportion. Whether that is true or not, I say incidentally that it is clear this question will be interesting to the constituents of the hon. Member.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to say that when I made an interruption to the right hon. gentleman I offered no opinion on his very interesting suggestions. If you want to placate Germany you ought to reduce your fleet.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I need not elaborate the point. It is absolutely necessary that we should have power to put duties on certain things if we are to retaliate in any way where our colonies are injured by the reprisals of foreign countries. There is only one other point that will have to be considered. Is it not conceivable that we shall have to defend our own trade against unjust competition—not against free exchange of commodities at their natural price, but against something which I believe is absolutely new and to which I am afraid insufficient attention has been given up to the present time? Has the House considered what is the practical working of the great trusts which are now being formed in America, and in Germany, and on the Continent—the enormous aggregations of capital wielded by one man, by a single brain, and which can be brought to bear in the way of destroying a particular industry in this country without running any risk whatever? We are the one open market of the world. We are the one dumping-ground of the world. Now what happens? Let me try to make that clear. Let us suppose a manufacturer sells goods to the extent of £50,000 a year and makes a profit of £5,000. His fixed expenses would be probably £6,000. But now if he can increase his business and sell £100,000 his profits will be not merely £10,000, but they will be added to by the reduction in the fixed expenses on the second £50,000. His profits upon the £100,000, instead of being £10,000, will probably be £15,000; and the result of that is that he can afford to sell, as compared with his previous condition, his second £50,000, not only without profit but at a loss. That is what is happening. In America the manufacturers are making and building up their works, and when there is a boom, as there has been recently, the works are at once increased; and, so long as the home trade will take all the works make, that is a most profitable arrangement for the manufacturers, and no goods come to this country. But the moment the boom is over, if to-morrow, there was a depression, say, in the iron trade, there is not the slightest doubt—it has been stated publicly by the President of that tremendous Steel and Iron Corporation, and it is actually being done at this moment by the great German Trust—it is perfectly certain that quantities of iron will be put down in this country or the countries we are supplying at a price we cannot possibly contest. Remember that is the issue.

AN HON. MEMBER: So much the better.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The hon. Member who is in a different line of business has no objection whatever to see manufacturers ruined. He has no objection whatever, apparently; he says indeed—so much the better. I say this result will occur, that, inasmuch as no manufacturer here can possibly stand a loss of that description for many years together, his business will be ruined and the whole of the capital lost as well as the profit. It is not merely the loss of two or three years profit, but the whole of the capital goes into the scrap-heap. At all events, to my mind it is one of the most serious issues we have to deal with. Of one thing I am perfectly certain. In spite of the hon. Member and of any decision given by the country, if it is raised in the country now, if there should be depression in some of the greatest industries, and this result should follow, nothing will prevent the people of this country from immediately imposing a duty which shall defend against such unfair competition a great and staple industry. Nothing will prevent the people of this country from immediately imposing a duty which shall defend against such unfair competition a great and stable industry. I think I have, at all events, indicated the lines on which my mind is moving and the discussion which I wish to raise—and which I promise the hon. Member I will raise—before the constituencies.

*MR. LOUGH: The right hon. gentleman has told us that he is in favour of reciprocity and preferential treatment for the colonies. I think the right hon. Gentleman has been excessively candid, and that the House owes him a great debt of gratitude for the full statement he has given to us. The right hon. Gentleman gave us one or two definitions which sounded very plausible, but only because we did not receive them in a very critical spirit. He asked what free trade was; but we are not talking of free trade, but of a free trade tariff, which is a very different thing. He told us that free trade was the free interchange of commodities at their natural price; but a free trade tariff is something quite different; it means a tariff for the purpose of revenue only, and not for the purpose of protection. We were all delighted to hear the speech of the noble Lord the Member for Greenwich. That speech was perfectly disastrous to the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman. The noble Lord said he hoped that for the next fifty years we would stick to the tariff this country had adopted—a tariff for the purpose of revenue only. For the first time in fifty years a leading Minister of the Crown, supported by the Prime Minister, has declared in favour of a tariff for the purpose of protection. That is a most momentous decision; and some protest ought to be made against it. The Colonial Secretary has been hurried into this decision by his desire to meet the wishes of the colonies. We all join in a spirit of that kind; and I do not think that my hon. friend the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs was very kindly treated by the noble Lord the Member for Greenwich when he referred to the feeling we all have about the Empire. We love it just as warmly as hon. Gentlemen opposite; and we might be allowed to carry on the discussion without being held up to contumely for the views we hold. I do not think the Colonial Secretary is treating his country very well in the manner in which he is carrying on the discussion. He said that Canada had asked for a preferential duty of a shilling on corn, and that we had not been able to make any reply to that application. That is a most unfair description. We have made a reply. We have taken off the shilling on corn to which Canada objected, and I suggest that that was a very friendly reply.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I do not think the matter is of the smallest importance; but at the Conference the Colonial Premiers said, "If you give us a drawback on this duty, we will discuss it with you further."

*Mr. LOUGH: I am much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman; but I think he might in his reply have done much better for this country. We have taken off the shilling duty, and the right hon. Gentleman might have made a better answer than he did. We have taken off the shilling duty; and, to that extent, we have done something to meet Canada. This point exhibits the fallacy which underlies the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman. He told us that Canada gave us in 1898 a preference of 25 per cent.; but the noble Lord the Member for Greenwich made a reply to that. He reminded the House that Canada was not forgetful of her own interests, and that she received a great advantage from this country by making this concession. If the right hon. Gentleman was willing to represent the policy of this country in a good light, he would have put it differently. The object Canada had in view in giving us a preferential tariff was not to benefit us, but to sell her own produce. I find that during the last four years the exports from Canada of butter have increased 110 per cent., of cheese, 50 per cent., of meat, 20 per cent., of hams, 100 per cent., and of apples, 50 per cent. Therefore Canada has had a splendid return from this country for anything she has done in the way of giving fair treatment to our exports. The issue has been fairly stated by the Colonial Secretary. He claims that he will put on duties against Germany. The noble Lord the Member for Greenwich says, let us not get angry with Germany; let us expostulate with Germany. I am in favour of the policy of the noble Lord; it is more consistent with the traditions of this country than the new fiscal policy of the right hon. Gentleman. I believe we have had this afternoon a more productive debate than we have had for many a long day. The candour of the Colonial Secretary is greatly to be praised. He admitted that his policy meant adopting preferential tariffs against foreign countries. Which is the first country we would strike? The United States. It is from that country that we receive the largest quantity of corn. The United States sends us twice as much food as any other country; and therefore, the first step will open a chasm between us and the United States—the other half of the Anglo-Saxon world. That will be the first of the fundamental follies this country will be led into if we follow this policy. The Prime

Minister said that we are getting into a serious condition so far as our exports are concerned. He suggests that it has become difficult to carry on trade with civilised countries. A return recently issued shows that the export trade of this country with such nations is not diminishing. It is growing; and, therefore, there is not the slightest necessity for us to adopt a policy of this kind. The trade returns were never better. What, therefore, is the reason why the Government is going in for this wild campaign? The reason is political; and a word of protest ought to be uttered against it. I believe that, however speciously the Colonial Secretary may clothe his new doctrine, he will not be able to show the people of this country that it will be to their advantage to depart from the traditional policy of free trade.

MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL: The statement of the Colonial Secretary is one of momentous importance and absorbing interest; and I hope the House will not think me presumptuous if I take the earliest opportunity of saying that I heard it with profound regret. I have read attentively the history of the great Home Rule crisis of 1886; and it seems to me that much injury might have been saved the Liberal Party, if all those who viewed the Home Rule policy of Mr. Gladstone with distrust and suspicion had taken the very earliest opportunity after its inception, of protesting against it in the most emphatic manner. Instead of that, they allowed themselves to slip from point to point; and then, when there was no means of retreat, the Party found itself committed to a policy which for twenty years has hung round its neck like a millstone. But I cannot say the system of preferential tariffs which the Colonial Secretary has advocated this afternoon does or ought to inspire the Conservative Party with enthusiasm and still less the measures which are to carry it to success. It is obvious that we cannot discuss this matter now at great length. These are matters which must be dealt with in the prolonged course of what will be the greatest controversy in the history of our country. But apart altogether from the merits of the question there are two considerations which I would most earnestly submit to the Government and the House of Commons. The first is this: you cannot stop, and the Colonial Secretary will not be able to stop if he desires to, at the simple system of preferential tariffs. He will have to fight a fierce battle in which the manufacturers, fair traders, and agricultural protectionists will be his supporters, and it is perfectly evident that their interests will have to be consulted at every stage. The idea of giving a preference to the colonies in matters which we must in any case tax for revenue, has now been extended to a definite proposal for the taxation of foodstuffs, and although it is perfectly clear that this proposal of protective duties on food will please agriculturists, or, at any rate, will please the bulk of them, what about the working man? And thus you are compelled to take a step forward and include old-age pensions in this scheme. The colonies will be pleased, no doubt, and the working classes may be placated by the promise of old-age pensions. The cost must, therefore, principally fall on the manufacturing fair traders, who will have to pay more [for labour, and who will, therefore, lose in neutral markets. They will insist on some tangible return, and the only one possible will be an elaborate system of bounties and duties. This move means a change, not only in historic English Parties, but in the conditions of our public life. The old Conservative Party, with its religious convictions and constitutional principles, will disappear, and a new Party will arise like perhaps the Republican Party of the United States of America—rich, materialist, and secular—whose opinions will turn on tariffs, and who will cause the lobbies to be crowded with the touts of protected industries. What is the cause of this change? Never was the wealth of the country greater, or the trade returns higher, or the loyalty of the colonies more pronounced. Is it that we are tired of these good days? There is no popular demand for this departure. I do not know what popular demand or popular movement the Colonial Secretary with his great popularity and persuasive manners may not be able to excite, but at the present moment there is no demand whatever, and not for the last 100 years has a more surprising departure been suggested.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I merely rise to say that Ireland is the country which more than any other has been injured by free trade. It is perfectly true that the policy of free trade adopted by this country injured it out of all proportion to the other parts of the Empire, and therefore I find no fault with the remarks of the Colonial Secretary, which were historically accurate. I merely rose to say that I think the proper way to deal with Germany if she injures Canada is to refuse to join Germany in the way in which we joined her in the question of Venezuela. I think there will be but one opinion as to the conduct of the Colonial Secretary in raising this question at this time, and that is, that his action is not calculated in any way to strengthen the Government of which he is a Member. What object he can have in raising this question now it is impossible to say, unless it be to wreck his Party.

Mr. HARWOOD (Bolton): There are one or two facts in relation to the subject of this debate to which I desire to call the attention of the Prime Minister. In the first place, what is the reason for this change of policy? It is quite clear that the condition of the Empire has never been better. Has not the late war revealed a feeling between the colonies and the Empire far in excess of what anybody had imagined? Why, then, disturb that happy relationship? As to the question of trade, who is complaining? Who finds things wrong? The Prime Minister seems to have it in his mind that we are moving towards a difficulty that we are coming to an *impasse*, and that we must make a new departure. But what are these signs? In every direction our trade is extending, and if any theory was ever justified by results it was the theory of free trade. It has been said that in the North we have made a fetish of free trade. But had any worship answered so well or proved so successful and profitable as the worship of free trade? I do not care to argue the matter as one of abstract theory; I am prepared to defend it as a practical fact. The Under Secretary of the Board of Trade has spoken of our supremacy at the beginning of last century and has asserted that we have not the same supremacy now. But it is not merely a matter of supremacy; it is a matter of the volume of business done that we regard. I remember the condition of my own town of Bolton at the beginning of our supremacy. For Bolton it was a time of very great distress. That town was then one-third the size it is now. Half the houses were empty, and the Government sent down a Commission to consider how best to cope with this distress. I have heard from my own people who were not among the poorest in those days. Even people of their class did not get white bread more than once or twice a week. Those facts have burned themselves into the minds of the people of the North. The Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary seemed to be haunted by the question of free trade. The Prime Minister gave us a definition of free trade as a free interchange of commodities at natural prices. We define free trade as being the free reception of all goods coming to our shores. It is all very well to have free trade with other people if they give you free trade in return, but the Prime Minister says we have not that interchange, and therefore we may question the wisdom of the policy. But we will accept a narrower definition of free trade. We are so convinced of the wisdom of free trade for ourselves that we will adhere to it if nobody else gives it. We are prepared to argue the question on the ground that free trade is the free reception of commodities from all countries at their natural price, excepting what charges may be necessary for revenue purposes. It is said that this country is made the dumping ground. All the better. I do not object to the baker and the grocer making my house the dumping ground for their goods; I am extremely glad to have them. It must be borne in mind in these discussions that the case of England cannot be argued on the analogy of the United States or Germany. The United States is a *cosmos* in itself. We in the North of England are convinced that if the United States had adopted the policy of free trade we should have had a very hard time of it. Great as her prosperity has been it would have been ten times greater had she had a sound fiscal system. Germany has secured her advantage by blending a number of States which previously had separate tariffs. The idea that we should shut out others because they shut us out is nonsense. This is not an abstract matter, and we can surely ask what is the matter. Is our business wrong? The Chancellor of the Exchequer and his predecessor had been astounded at the ease with which they could raise revenue. Is our Empire wrong? Everybody acknowledges that never was it in a more successful condition than now. The Prime Minister may appreciate an historical illustration. Why did Athens fall? Because they mixed up fiscal tariffs with political motives. Why did the Empire of Rome break in pieces? For the very same reason. Why is the colonial empire of France a failure? Because of the same mixing up of fiscal and political theories. We do not want to be passionate, but if ever there has been a message to rouse our blood and make us fight this is one. We feel that not only is the welfare and the bread of our people concerned, not only the success of our trade, but also the happy brotherly love of the Empire, which will be displaced by a condition which may break the Empire in pieces.

MR. PEMBERTON (Sunderland): The Prime Minister has told us that this matter was really only to be discussed in the future, but after the speech of the Colonial Secretary it is impossible not to feel that this programme—if it is a programme—is the programme of the Leaders of the Unionist Party now. Although the Colonial Secretary said it was not necessary to settle this at once, he also said you could not keep the colonies waiting long in a state of uncertainty, and I do not think those two remarks are quite consistent. The conclusion one must come to is that if it is necessary for the future of the Empire, and the closer union of the different parts of the Empire, to have some kind of preferential tariffs, on the Colonial Secretary's own showing that ought to be settled at once, and the issue put before the country. I do not think it possible at present to express any definite opinion on the value of the programme, but I do not wish it to be supposed that all members of the Conservative and Unionist Party, because they have been members of that Party in the past, necessarily approve of this programme. If we are to approach this question in a proper way we must disassociate ourselves from that implication, and many others on this side hold the same view. What the future may bring forth, whether it will justify the adoption of this policy for which there is plenty of argument, I do not know, and at present we do not express any opinion upon it.

MODERN ART IN IRELAND.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.) called attention to the question of the development of art in Ireland. The present condition of the country was especially suitable for certain steps to be taken. During the last five or six years, largely as a result of the work of the Gaelic League, there had been a remarkable development of the literary and musical instincts of the people, and that work was also having a striking effect on the question of art. He desired to know whether the Government were prepared to help this movement. A number of artists of Irish descent had offered to the nation pictures to the value of £15,000, provided a proper site were given for a gallery of modern art, and wealthy and patriotic citizens were willing on the same condition to contribute money towards the cost of such a gallery. Hitherto the development of art had been greatly handicapped by the unfortunate position in which the school of art was placed. The Royal Hibernian Academy lay on the northern side of the city, which was practically a residential quarter no longer, and unless the Royal Hibernian Academy buildings were placed on a more suitable site it would be impossible properly to carry on the cultivation of art in Ireland. Could not the Government promise to grant suitable sites for these two buildings? All Irishmen naturally desired that the artistic development of Ireland should proceed on national lines, they recognised that it could not be done on narrow principles. Art had an international basis, and if their art students were to keep up with those of other nations it was necessary that they should have the best art brought to their doors. A collection of the works of the best modern artists was absolutely essential if any real progress was to be made, and he understood the Dublin Corporation were willing to assist in this direction if only a site were provided. Irish students ought not to be forced to go abroad to lay the proper foundations of artistic culture, and he sincerely hoped what was really the only suitable site would be granted by the Government. Unless the present opportunity were availed of it would probably pass away for ever. He therefore entreated the Government to see whether in connection with the Dublin Public Offices Bill they could not arrange to set aside the small site necessary for the two purposes he had named.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. ELLIOT, Durham) was afraid he could not add much to his remarks of the previous day. He deeply sympathised with the desires of the hon. Member. All would be prepared to do what they could to assist with the development and encouragement of art in Ireland. At the same time it had to be remembered that the Bill to which the hon. Member had referred only contemplated the provision of public offices in Dublin, and the erection of buildings for the Royal College of Science. For those purposes a large expenditure of money was necessary; the amount had been fixed, and after careful consideration the Treasury had come to the conclusion it was not at present in a position to make a further advance.

MR. BOLAND said he was not asking that there should be any advance under the Bill, but that the site should be allocated in a slightly different way. It would be possible on the large site in Dublin to put a modern gallery. If only some promise were given that some part of the site would be given up for the Royal Hibernian Academy and a gallery of modern art, he should be quite satisfied.

MR. ELLIOT said he was not now in a position to make any promise, but the question could be considered before the Committee. He had great sympathy with the objects of the hon. Member, but he could not see his way to give any definite pledge.

THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND.

*MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) said he desired to call the attention of the House to the increasing extension of deer forests in the Highlands of Scotland. As the leases of the sheep farms ran out instead of the land being placed at the disposal of the people for cultivation and grazing these farms were being turned into deer forests. What had the Congested Districts Board done to place these lands at the disposal of the people? There was abundance of land to be obtained, as was clearly shown by the Reports of the Royal Commissions. Was it the intention of the Government to act on those Reports and place at the disposal of the people some of those lands? Compulsory powers ought to be given to the Congested Districts Board, and until they were obtained there would be no satisfactory settlement of the Highland Land Question. Perhaps there was more congestion in the Island of Lewis than in any other part of the Highlands of Scotland. He was sorry to detain hon. Members, but if the Scottish Office did its part it would be unnecessary for him to do so. The Government ought to take some action and look into these matters and not ignore the subject simply because it was a Highland question. During the late war the Highlands sent large numbers of soldiers to South Africa. Surely the Highland people were entitled to better treatment. If he could get a promise that the question would be dealt with on the lines of the Irish Land Bill he would be satisfied. Not long ago he asked the Secretary for Scotland by a Question in this House if the Scottish Office would arrange for an exhibition of home-spun tweeds, and was told in reply that if he would make all the necessary arrangements himself and take the initiative something might be done. He should like to know what the officials of the Scottish Office and the Congested Districts Board were paid for. Arrangements ought to be made for providing hospital accommodation in the Island of Lewis for the reception of cases of typhus and typhoid, the miserable homes of the patients being unsuitable for their proper treatment and isolation. He complained that it was difficult to find the officials at the Local Government Board Offices in Edinburgh when making a personal call relative to such matters. His experience was to find the office doors locked. In regard to sanitary matters it was necessary that something should be done to remedy the shockingly insanitary condition of the dwellings. The law in many parts of the congested area was absolutely ignored. He suggested that an inspector should be sent down to insist upon the houses being kept in a sanitary state. Referring to the question of vaccination, he said the supply of lymph for Scotland was most unsatisfactory. Human lymph, which was prohibited in England, was constantly used in Scotland notwithstanding its condemnation by the Royal Commission on Vaccination. He called attention to the practice of appointing medical officers of health who had not obtained the public health diploma, and suggested that those who received such appointments should hold the diploma, as that fact would afford some guarantee that they understood the work they had to perform.

*THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SCOTT DICKSON, Glasgow, Bridgton): I am afraid that at this hour of the evening it is hardly possible to enter into the details of the matters to which the hon. Member has referred. I think it is perhaps the less necessary to do so when one remembers that a great many of the questions the hon. Member has touched upon were really matters which were discussed just this month last year, so that there has not been much room for a reversal of the policy which was then stated by my hon. and learned friend the Lord Advocate. The hon. Gentleman has referred to an important fact, namely, the visit of the Secretary for Scotland to the West Highlands. I am sure that is likely to result in benefit both in the administration of the law and in promoting the interest which the hon. Member has at heart. I would remind him, however, that in regard to the providing of land in connection with the administration of the Congested Districts Board, as has been more than once pointed out land is only valuable to those who are able to make use of it. I think that the policy of the Government in regard to that matter has been one in which the old Scotch proverb becomes true, "The more haste the less speed." The desire of those who are entrusted with the administration of the law is that as much progress should be made in the matter as is consistent with the effective securing of the purpose in view. The hon. Member is aware that some property has been acquired, and the Government are in hope that further progress will be made in that direction, but I doubt exceedingly whether the giving to the Congested Districts Board compulsory powers would do much to promote the object to which the hon. Gentleman has referred. With regard to the Local Government Board, I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman has been so unfortunate when visiting the offices in Edinburgh. I have been more lucky when I have been there.

*MR. WEIR: They knew you were coming.

*MR. SCOTT DICKSON: As to the provision of hospitals I, am aware that that matter is receiving the attention of the Local Government Board, and they are doing a great deal to secure that the provision of hospitals all over the country should be carried on more rapidly than hitherto. The securing of medical officers of health with the public health diploma is not a matter in regard to which the Local Government Board can possibly do much, because so much depends on the pecuniary inducements offered to medical men in the different localities, and these are often not such as to provide much temptation to them to obtain the diploma. The only other matter referred to by the hon. Gentleman was with regard to the provision of vaccine lymph. I would ask him to allow me to refer him to what the Secretary for Scotland said a few weeks ago in Edinburgh, at a meeting where the matter was considered. The Secretary for Scotland explained what was being done in this matter, and showed that the question was one which was receiving attention, and which really had been put on a footing which left nothing to be desired in that respect. With regard to the question of land, the policy of the Government remains as it has been, to carry out the settlement of the people on the land as rapidly as the means at their disposal will allow.

FISCAL POLICY OF THE COUNTRY.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Before we separate for the holidays, perhaps the Prime Minister will gratify the somewhat legitimate anxiety felt on this side of the House, and answer a question which has the merit that it can be answered by a simple "Yes" or "No." When the right hon. Gentleman spoke I did not quite gather whether his views on fiscal policy were those of the Colonial Secretary, and, indeed, it is not clear that he knew precisely what that policy was. Since then we have had a valuable and interesting speech in which the Colonial Secretary has made his meaning clear. My question is are we to understand that these were the views of the Colonial Secretary in his individual and personal capacity, or were they the views of the Cabinet?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot speak again.

ACCIDENTS IN MINES.

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield) said he wished to call attention to the necessity of legislation for the prevention of accidents in mines.

*MR. SPEAKER: This is not an occasion for discussing the necessity of legislation. Acts of administration may be referred to, but the hon. Member cannot proceed to propose legislation.

Resolved, That this House do now adjourn until Monday, 8th June.—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

Adjourned at a quarter after Seven o'clock till Monday, 8th June.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 8th June, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS.

The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Bridgwater Gas Bill; Sutton District Water Bill. Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Blackheath and Greenwich District Electric Light Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Pelican and British Empire Life Office Bill [Lords]. Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

Wolverhampton and Cannock Chase Railway (Extension of Time) Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Beckenham Urban District Council Bill; Cleveland and Durham County Electric Power Bill [Lords]. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Great Western Railway Bill. As amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time.

Grindleford, Baslow, and Bakewell Railway Bill; Hainault Forest Bill; Harrow and Stanmore Gas Bill [Lords]; India Rubber, Gutta Percha, and Telegraph Works Company Bill [Lords]; London County Council (Money) Bill; Milford Docks Bill [Lords]; Neath, Pontardawe, and Brynamman Railway Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

North Eastern Railway Bill. As amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time.

Romford and District Tramways Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

South Wales Mineral Railway Bill [Lords], [not amended], considered; to be read the third time.

Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Bill [Lords]; Wellington (Salop) Gas Bill [Lords]; Wood Green Urban District Council Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Dudley, Stourbridge, and District Tramways Bill [Lords]; Scunthorpe Urban District Water Bill [Lords]; Shepshed Urban Gas Bill [Lords]; Somerset and District Electric Power Bill [Lords]. Read a second time, and committed.

Forth Navigation Order Confirmation Bill, considered; to be read the third time upon Wednesday.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2). Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Dawlish, Bude, and Sandown, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour.

Ordered, That Standing Order 193A be suspended, and that the Bill be read the first time.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill. "To confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Dawlish, Bude, and Sandown," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 233.]

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 3). Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Aultbea, and Pennan, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour.

Ordered, That Standing Order 193A be suspended, and that the Bill be read the first time.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill. "To confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Aultbea and Pennan," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 234.]

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 4). Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Sligo, Limerick, and Dundalk, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour.

Ordered, That Standing Order, 193A be suspended, and that the Bill be read the first time.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill. "To confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Sligo, Limerick and Dundalk," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 235.]

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 5). Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Boscombe and Bournemouth, Carnarvon, Gorleston, Herne Bay, and Avoch, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour.

Ordered, That Standing Order 193A be suspended, and that the Bill be read the first time.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill. "To confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Boscombe and Bournemouth, Carnarvon, Gorleston, Herne Bay, and Avoch," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 236.]

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 6). Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Truro and Salen (Mull), ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour.

Ordered, That Standing Order 193A be suspended, and that the Bill be read the first time.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill. "To confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, relating to Truro and Salen (Mull)," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills and to be printed. [Bill 237.]

PETITIONS.

BURGH POLICE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Hawick, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.

Petition from East Dulwich, against; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petition from Isle of Wight, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL.

Petitions against: from Stockton-on-Tees; and Leicester; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL, AND LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.

Petition from Oldham, against; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.

Petition from Stockton-on-Tees, against; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Leith, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Govan, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.

Petition from East Dulwich, against; to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petitions against (praying to be heard by Counsel): from Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress; Wandsworth and Putney Gas Light and Coke Company; Commissioners of Sewers for Lombard's Wall to Gravesend Bridge; Public Wharfingers and others in the Port of London; Commissioners of Sewers for the Havering and Rainham and other levels; Commissioners of Sewers from Gravesend Bridge to Sheerness; Company of Proprietors of the Grand Junction Canal; Kent and Essex Brickmasters' and Flint Merchants' Protection Association; Commissioners of Sewers for the levels of Fobbing and other places; Association of Master Lightermen and Bargeowners of the Port of London; and William Cory & Son, Limited; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill.

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Kettering; Droylsden; King's Lynn; Springburn; Harleston; and Broxbourne; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

Petition from Gillingham, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA (TAXATION OF NATIVES).

Return [presented 28th May] to be printed. [No. 184.]

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS (WHITSUNTIDE RECESS).

The following Papers, presented by Command of His Majesty during the Whitsuntide recess, were delivered to the Librarian of the House of Commons during the recess, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 14th August, 1896:—

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2987 to 2990.

TREATY SERIES (No. 8, 1903).

Copy of Protocol between the United Kingdom and the United States of Venezuela relating to the settlement of British Claims and other matters; signed at Washington, 13th February, 1903; together with agreements for the reference of certain questions to the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague, and for the decision of the claims by a Mixed Commission; signed at Washington, 7th May, 1903.

COLONIES.

Copy of Papers relating to the Investigation of Malaria and other Tropical Diseases, and the Establishment of Schools of Tropical Medicine.

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS (IRELAND).

Copy of Agricultural Statistics of Ireland, with detailed Report for the year 1902.

PUBLIC RECORDS.

Copy of Sixty-fourth Annual Report of the Deputy-Keeper of the Public Records.

EXPLOSIVES.

Copy of Twenty-seventh Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspectors of Explosives, being for the year 1902.

Ordered, That the said Papers do lie upon the Table.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT.

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 7th May—*Mr. Lloyd Morgan*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 185.]

EXPERIMENTS ON LIVING ANIMALS.

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 26th May—*Mr. Cochrane*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 186.]

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF SURREY).

Copy presented, of Order made by the County Council of the County of Surrey, ordering that a second polling place be provided for the Parish of Godstone at Blindley Heath [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

ALKALI, ETC., WORKS REGULATION ACTS, 1881 AND 1892.

Copy presented, of Thirty-ninth Annual Report on Alkali, etc., Works by the Chief Inspector, being for 1902 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 187.]

DUBLIN METROPOLITAN POLICE.

Copy presented, of Statistical Tables for the year 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

CONGESTED DISTRICTS BOARD (IRELAND).

Copy presented, of Twelfth Report of the Board, being for the year ending 31st March, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION (IRELAND).

Copy presented, of Rule made by the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland appointing the places at which examinations shall be held for 1903 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (RULES).

Copy presented, of Rule made by the Irish Land Commission as to Assistant Commissioners, dated the 18th May, 1903 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

STRIKES AND LOCK-OUTS.

Copy presented, of Report by the Chief Labour Correspondent on the Strikes and Lock-outs of 1902, and on Conciliation and Arbitration Boards [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION.

Return presented, relative thereto ordered 27th May—*Mr. Bonar Law*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 188.]

INEBRIATES ACT, 1898, PRISONS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1877, AND SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND ACTS, 1885-1889.

Copy presented, of Rule made by the Secretary for Scotland as to the appointment of a visiting Committee to the State Inebriate Reformatory at Perth [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

SOUTH AFRICA.

Copy presented, of Draft Customs Union Convention agreed to by representatives of the British Colonies and Territories in South Africa at a Conference at Bloemfontein in March, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ALIENS (NATURALISATION) (TRANSVAAL AND ORANGE RIVER COLONY)

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 20th May—*Mr. John Ellis*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 189.]

VICTORIA (THE CONSTITUTION ACT, 1903.)

Copy presented, of the Constitution Act, 1903 (Victoria) [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 190.]

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY.

Copy presented, of Forty-sixth Annual Report of the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery, 1902–3 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.

Copy presented, of Returns relating to the Council up to 31st March, 1903, with Estimate of Expenditure for the year ending 31st March, 1904 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 191.]

IMPERIAL INSTITUTE ACCOUNT.

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 26th May, 1903, directing that the Imperial Institute Account shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

SUPERANNUATIONS.

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 23rd May, 1903, declaring that for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the office of Third Assistant to the Chief Crown Solicitor for Ireland, professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired in the Public Service are required [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1884.

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 13th May, 1903, declaring that Joseph Woolverton, Royal Laboratory, War Office, was appointed without a Civil Service certificate, through inadvertence on the part of the Head of his Department [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

Paper laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House:—

LOCAL LOANS FUND.

Accounts of the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt in respect of the capital and income of the Local Loans Fund for the year ended 31st March, 1902; with report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to be printed. [No. 192.]

IRISH LAND BILL.

Return ordered, "giving the text of the Enactments to which reference is made in the Irish Land Bill."—(*Mr. Wyndham.*)

Return presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed [No. 193.]

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 1) BILL [LORDS].

Copy ordered, "of Memorandum stating the nature of the proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [Lords]."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*)

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2) BILL.

Copy ordered "of Memorandum stating the nature of the proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*)

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 3) BILL.

Copy ordered, "of Memorandum stating the nature of the proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*)

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 4) BILL.

Copy ordered, "of Memorandum stating the nature of the proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*)

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 5) BILL.

Copy ordered "of Memorandum stating the nature of the proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*)

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 6) BILL.

Copy ordered, "of Memorandum stating the nature of the proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

New Workhouse at Tetbury.

LORD EDMUND FITZMAURICE (Wiltshire, Cricklade): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if any steps have yet been taken in regard to the construction of a new workhouse at Tetbury; and if it is proposed to hold a local inquiry.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) The guardians submitted for my approval plans for the erection of a new workhouse on a site comprising that of the present building, with some adjoining land. On the 23rd of last month I informed the guardians that the erection of a workhouse on this limited and inconvenient site would probably cost as much as a new workhouse on an altogether fresh site, and I pointed out to them that their scheme was otherwise open to objection in that the area at their disposal would not admit of a desirable arrangement of the buildings or the possibility of any extension in the future, and that the confined character of the existing yards would be maintained. In view of those objections I requested the guardians to reconsider the matter, and I am awaiting a further communication from them on the subject. I do not propose that a local inquiry should be held at the present time.

Rates in Support of Secondary Schools.

MR. J. H. LEWIS (Flint Boroughs): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether he will ascertain what county or county borough councils in England have resolved to levy rates for the support of secondary schools under the powers conferred upon them by The Education Act, 1902.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) County and county borough councils will probably not levy rates for the support of secondary schools until they have ascertained how far the residue under the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act is insufficient for the purpose. This information is not at present in the possession of the Board, but a Return will be furnished as in previous years as to the expenditure of local authorities under this head showing the amount derived from rates.

British Rights in Southern Persia.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): To ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what are the rights possessed by His Majesty's Government in southern Persia that are admitted by that country; are these rights to be found in any agreement signed by Persia; and do they include the right of His Majesty's Government to forbid the grant of Persian territory for coaling stations and ports to any other Power.

(*Answered by Lord Cranborne.*) My reply to the hon. Member for Barnsley on 23rd February† and to the hon. Gentleman himself on 27th May,‡ and the statement made by Lord Lansdowne in another place on 5th May,† contain information bearing upon the hon. Gentleman's Question. It would not be for the public interest that I should make any further reply.

Chinese and Black Labour in the Transvaal Mines.

MR. LABOUCHERE: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that certain persons in the Transvaal are engaged in negotiations with agents to obtain from the Congo State blacks for the Transvaal mines; and whether he is prepared to give an assurance that no contracts will be allowed to be concluded by individuals in the Transvaal either to import further black labour or Chinese labour into the Transvaal under contracts until this House has expressed its approval.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) No, Sir, I have no knowledge of any such negotiations. The question of the supply of labour in the Transvaal is receiving the careful consideration of His Majesty's Government, and this House will have the usual opportunities of discussing any action which the Government may take in the matter.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Sale of War Stores—Disease Infected Blankets.

SIR THOMAS DEWAR (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has yet received from the General Officer Commanding in South Africa a report explaining the circumstances under which discarded hospital blankets were sold in South Africa; will he state the result of the inquiry, the number of blankets sold, and the amount which they realised; and, in the interest of public health, will he consider the expediency of issuing instructions that all stores composed wholly or in part of textile fabrics which have been used in the field, whether in hospital or otherwise, shall be carefully disinfected before they pass out of the hands of the military authorities.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxviii., 484.

‡ See page 12.

† See (4) *Debates*, cxxi., 1343.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): The General Officer Commanding, South Africa, reports that in October last, owing to the rapid demobilisation of the troops, an enormous stock of unwashed general service blankets, returned to store by the troops on demobilisation, was stored at the Cape Town Ordnance Stores, stacked in the open under tarpaulins. Efforts were made to have these washed and properly stored, but meanwhile the stacks took fire by spontaneous combustion and endangered the entire ordnance depôt. Prompt action became imperative, and the chief ordnance officer gave instructions for large numbers of those in the worst condition to be destroyed by fire, and accepted tenders for the sale of 80,000, provided they were removed within three days. These blankets were not unserviceable, though they had not been washed. The amount realised by the sale was £1,495. Medical officers have, under the regulations, power to destroy any articles of public property on sanitary grounds, and are expressly ordered to disinfect all soiled bedding which has been in contact with the sick. I am not prepared to issue so wide an order as that suggested—that all textile fabrics which have been used in the field should be disinfected before being sold. As previously stated, the ordnance and medical regulations contain clear instructions as to the disposal of condemned or infected articles; and I also issued special orders forbidding the sale in South Africa of any textile article which might convey infection. There appears to have been an error of judgment on the part of the responsible officer, who had otherwise done excellent service. The military authorities are investigating the matter.

SIR THOMAS DEWAR: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the hospital blankets which reached this country from South Africa as discarded War Office stores have yet been traced in the towns in the provinces to which they were distributed; and can he say whether the local authorities have in every case taken steps to secure the destruction or disinfection of these infected blankets.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. WALTER LONG, Bristol, S.): I sent a circular letter to about 200 sanitary authorities in England and Wales, in whose districts it was reported that some of the blankets referred to had been received, and advised them as to the measures which should be adopted in order to safeguard the public against any possible infection from the blankets. I have not received reports from all the authorities; but, so far as my information goes, I have every reason to be satisfied with the action taken in the matter.

Discarded Military Tents.

SIR THOMAS DEWAR: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state the number of discarded military tents which have been sold in South Africa, and the amount which they realised; were they disinfected, and were they sold by tender or by public auction; and will he also state the number of hospital tents sold, and say whether any, and, if so what, steps were taken to secure their disinfection.

MR. BRODRICK: About 2,760 tents are known to have been sold, of which only four were hospital marquees. They were sold by auction and tender. The amount realised was £970. Under the medical regulations medical officers are authorised to destroy public property on sanitary grounds when necessary, and are also in possession of stringent instructions regarding disinfection. I have no reason to suppose these instructions were disregarded.

John Bright's Statue.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the hon. Member for West Derbyshire, as representing the First Commissioner of Works, whether he will arrange for the statue of the late Right Hon. John Bright to be placed in the position now occupied by the bust of Oliver Cromwell.

MR. VICTOR CAVENDISH (Derbyshire, W.): The position now occupied by this fine bust of Oliver Cromwell, the work of Bernini, was very carefully selected, and the proportions of the pedestal were specially designed with regard to it. The First Commissioner would deprecate its removal to another site.

Worn Silver Coinage.

SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to the worn condition of the small silver coins of the late reign; and whether he will direct the minting of new coins to replace those now in circulation.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): Worn silver coin is withdrawn from circulation by the Bank of England, and latterly the rate of withdrawal has been increased. The Bank are always prepared to receive worn silver coin from bankers on the same terms as coin which is in good condition; the withdrawal, therefore, of larger quantities of worn coin depends in a great measure on them. As the Bank hold ready for issue small silver coin to the amount of £425,000, there is no necessity to direct special minting operations.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Has the right hon. Gentleman observed the scarcity of shillings and sixpences, and the superabundance of two shilling pieces and half-crowns?

*MR. RITCHIE: Yes; that arises, I think, from considerations of convenience in giving change. People prefer to give it in large pieces. I should be delighted to issue as many sixpences and shillings as there may be any demand for.

Alien Criminals.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state the approximate cost of maintaining in His Majesty's prisons the 3,449 aliens who were sentenced to imprisonment for crimes committed in England and Wales in the twelve months ending 31st March, 1903, in addition to sixty-two sentences to penal servitude; and what steps His Majesty's Government proposes to take in the matter.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): The information desired by my hon. and gallant friend could not be obtained without calculations of an elaborate nature which, even if practicable, would not, in my opinion, serve any public purpose. All the salient facts on the subject have been carefully laid before the Royal Commission and will appear in the minutes of evidence.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: Is the sum spent in maintaining these prisoners upwards of £30,000 per annum?

*MR. AKERS DOUGLAS: I will make inquiries.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: Can the right hon. Gentleman give any hope of legislation on the subject this session?

*MR. AKERS DOUGLAS: No, Sir.

Oliver Cromwell's Bust.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the hon. Member for West Derbyshire, as representing the First Commissioner of Works, if he will explain why the name of the donor is inscribed upon the pedestal of the bust of Oliver Cromwell, and why the name of the donor or names of the donors of all other busts or statues is or are not inscribed upon the respective pedestals.

MR. VICTOR CAVENDISH: In the case of the bust of Oliver Cromwell the donor was a single individual who desired his name to be associated with the gift. In the other cases there were a number of subscribers who expressed no such wish.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): I should like to know whether it is the case that persons who wish to advertise themselves in this way are entitled to do so.

SUPPLY [11TH ALLOTTED DAY.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

1. Motion made and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £563,000, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1904, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Customs Department."

*SIR EDWARD STRACHEY (Somersetshire, S.) moved the reduction of the salary of the Chairman of the Board of Customs by £100 in order to call attention to the refusal of the Board to give information as regards the names and addresses of persons to whom foreign milk was consigned in this country and by whom it was sold. The Committee might think this a trifling matter, but he held that the British Dairy Farmers' Association, on whose behalf he was raising the question, were just as much entitled to find out who imported and sold this milk, as were those who desired that the sellers of foreign meat should declare themselves, or as sellers of manufactured foreign-made goods were known. He did not want to prevent foreign milk from being sold in this country, but he submitted that the purchaser had the right to know whether he was buying English or foreign milk. The milk ought to be imported under proper restrictions. Home dairy farmers were subject to strict rules as to inspection and registration, but this milk might, for all they knew, come from insanitary dairies or it might be left standing on wharves under insanitary conditions. The risks of infection were consequently great. At present it was unknown to the Customs or the seller or consumer under what conditions, sanitary or insanitary, this foreign milk was produced. Further than that it was quite possible that it was retailed as English milk, and the consumer was thus defrauded by paying a higher price. He failed to understand the anxiety of the Government to protect the foreign trader in this matter, and he did urge that the Board of Customs, in the interests of the health of the public, might well give the information as to who were the consignees of this milk, so that people might know when they were buying milk produced under safeguards in the interest of public health, or foreign milk, in respect of which they had no guarantee.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item A (Salaries) be reduced by £100, in respect of the salary of the Chairman."—(*Sir Edward Strachey.*)

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. ELLIOT, Durham) was understood to deny that the Government were in favour of foreign milk being put on the market under more favourable conditions than English milk. The Government were in favour of good food being put on the market from what ever direction it might come. He did not think it was the duty of the Government, without legislation, to cause to be put over a man's shop a statement as to where he got his goods from. The hon. Member would have rested his case on a surer basis if he had brought forward any specific cases where injury had been done.

*SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: My complaint lies in a nutshell. The Board of Customs absolutely refuse to give the names and addresses of those who import foreign milk into this country. I want to know why they refuse it, and in whose interest they do so.

MR. ELLIOT: It is not their duty to do so. If, however, the hon. Member will talk the matter over with me, and if he can place before me any cases in which milk is complained of, I will see what can be done.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said he was very glad to hear from the Secretary to the Treasury, the sole representative of the Government present, that they would welcome the importation of food from whatever quarter it came. But he was bound to confess that the hon. Gentleman's statement was not at all consistent with the action of the President of the Board of Trade in introducing a Bill giving power to absolutely prohibit the importation of sugar under certain circumstances dictated by a foreign Commission sitting at Brussels. He thought it was an unreasonable request to ask for the names and addresses of persons who imported foreign milk. It was asking the Commissioners of Customs to go beyond their proper duty in a matter in which they had no concern, and with which they were not competent to deal. It was not a matter for the executive Government to deal with the importation of foreign foods by way of prohibition, or by way of setting up signs to frighten the importer of foreign articles. He was not aware that the quality of the milk was complained of.

*SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: Some has been seized on account of its quality.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said he could quite understand the Customs authorities having power to stop the importation of bad milk, but the proposal of the hon. Member was that all foreign milk, good or bad, should be dealt with in an exceptional manner, and he should therefore resist the Amendment.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.) supported the Amendment. As a London Member representing a crowded constituency, where naturally great quantities of milk were consumed, he claimed that the people had a right to know where their milk supply came from. They thought they were justified in asking that the Government should do all in its power, not simply to benefit the farmers throughout this country, but to give to the consumers of milk some protection against having foisted on them foreign milk which might have been produced under insanitary conditions, or had been left standing on insanitary wharves. It was important that the rising generation should be supplied with the best of milk. It was said that no complaints had been made against the quality of this foreign milk; but what he desired was to have every possible guarantee that a food so closely connected with the health of the people should be absolutely fresh and of the best quality, and not stale and poor.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said that no complaint had been made that the foreign milk was impure. They had been told that some had been seized because it was bad, and surely there could be no complaint on that ground. This, he wished to point out, was a proposal to reduce the salary of a public official because he declined to do that which by law he had no power to do. Sir Henry Primrose was not empowered by law to take the course which was suggested, and they ought not therefore, to punish him for refusing to act illegally.

MR. COHEN (Islington, E.) said he had listened to the debate with surprise. This was a proposal to brand as inferior anything imported from abroad in the way of food. That was a strange nostrum to come from a Party which professed to have a desire to do away with everything that had the least semblance of protection about it. He objected to the suggestion made by the mover of the Amendment that the names and addresses of importers of milk should be supplied. There was no ground for imposing a restriction because of the fear that milk might possibly have been tainted in course of transit from abroad. It was not alleged that this milk was adulterated in any way. He did not think the hon. Member for King's Lynn had treated the Secretary to the Treasury fairly in his interpretation of his remarks.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I did not put any construction on his words. I only pointed out that he held certain views and that the Government held other views.

MR. COHEN suggested there was no parallel between the cases of milk and sugar. One was a taxed article, the other was not, and he hoped it never would be.

He believed there was no ground whatever for putting any statutory regulation on the importation of such a necessary article of food, which he believed could not be produced in sufficient quantities in this country.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) said that he had never given a Protectionist vote in the course of his life, and he did not regard this as a question of protection. It was a subject affecting the public health, and when he was President of the Local Government Board there was reason to believe that some of the preservatives used in milk were deleterious to the public health. If the hon. Member opposite went to a division he certainly would support him.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.) thought the Chairman of the Board of Customs had been a little hardly dealt with in this matter as no rule empowering names and addresses to be given could either be laid down or carried out without having consequences which the House certainly could not approve. The hon. Member had not met the Financial Secretary quite fairly. The hon. Gentleman had offered to confer with him with regard to any abuse that might exist, and surely he ought to be satisfied with that promise. They ought not to pass any reflections on the Board of Customs in connection with that matter.

*SIR EDWARD STRACHEY said that he would not press his Amendment if he were given an opportunity of raising the question on Report, should the Financial Secretary on consideration of the matter decide that he could not assent to giving the names and addresses of the importers of this milk.

MR. ELLIOT said that he had only expressed his wish to know on what facts the hon. Member's grievance was based. After all, the Board of Customs had well defined duties to perform, and they could not do exactly what they liked with information that came to them confidentially. It was not the business of the Board to help the foreigner against the home producer or the home producer against the foreigner. The right course of the hon. Member was to legislate.

* MR. MACONOCHIE (Aberdeenshire, E.) was sure that many Members on both sides of the House sympathised with the mover of the Amendment, so far as he desired to secure pure articles of food. If it was true that the milk that came over here was adulterated there was no reason why they should not stop it, but if they took into consideration the fact that the Chairman of the Board of Customs had no power whatever to give the information asked for without a special Act of Parliament, he thought it was a trifle unreasonable for Sir Edward Strachey to press this Motion. It appeared to him that the whole of Sir Edward Strachey's argument went to prove that he sympathised with the views of some Members of the House in the shape of protection, and in trying to stop supplies which might increase the food of the people.

*SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: Absolutely the contrary. The hon. Member entirely misrepresents me, and the Committee would recognise his object in so doing at the present moment.

* MR. MACONOCHIE did not want to misrepresent the hon. Member, but they had the idea on the Government side of the House that that was the way his argument inclined. He (Mr. Maconochie) was sure, after the undertaking given by the Secretary to the Treasury that he could not very well give the information sought. Sir Edward Strachey would withdraw from his position, for he could not hold that they should deliberately propose that the Chairman of the Board of Customs should break the rule which he had no power to override without a special Act of Parliament.

*SIR EDWARD STRACHEY said that, in view of the Financial Secretary's statement that the information he had asked for might require legislation, and that the Chairman of the Board of Customs was under legal obligation not to give the information, he felt it would not be right to press the Motion for the reduction of the salary of the Chairman of the Board of Customs until the point had been cleared up, and he therefore asked leave to withdraw his Amendment.

Leave to withdraw refused.

Question put and negatived.

Original Question again proposed.

MR. TOULMIN (Bury, Lancashire) said that a large addition to the staff of the Customs had been necessitated by the sugar, coal, and corn duties. They had been told that 444 persons had been added to the staff at an annual cost of £57,000. Now that the corn duty was to be abolished, he asked for some assurance that the staff would be proportionately reduced. Three years ago the staff numbered 3,986, the next year it went up to 4,114, and now it had been very slightly reduced to 4,073. The cost had, however, not diminished. There had, on the contrary, been a considerable increase under the head of superintendents. In 1901–2 these officials numbered 231; now there were 262 of them, and it certainly did seem singular that when the general staff had been reduced in numbers there should have been an increase in the number of superintendents. He must press for some assurance that now that the corn duty was to be abolished the staff should be decreased.

MR. ELLIOT said that even after the corn duty ceased to be levied there would be much extra work in the readjustment of rebates. Any reduction in the staff would be more apparent next year than in the present year. In such a department as the Customs it was necessary to look a little beyond the service of the moment, and it was probable that the changes in regard to the importation of sugar would entail a considerable increase of the Customs staff, because refining would have to be done in bond. Still he hoped that when the corn duty had been abolished it would be possible to effect some reduction.

MR. TOULMIN asked for an explanation of the increase in the superintendence charges.

MR. ELLIOT said that there had been an enormous increase in the work of making returns, and that had largely fallen on the superintendents.

MR. WHITLEY (Halifax) did not think the reply of the hon. Gentleman altogether satisfactory. He had suggested that an increased staff would be required because sugar refineries were to be placed in bond. But that was not a new policy of the Government this year. It was announced a year ago, and any increase of the staff due to the sugar duties must have been contemplated before these Estimates were framed. The hon. Gentleman's predecessor in office estimated the increased cost of staff through the corn duties for one year at £8,500, and seeing that the tax was only to be in force for three months of this financial year so large a sum ought not now to be asked. The principle laid down was that money should be only taken for the necessities of the financial year and therefore it was hardly fair to be asked to vote money for contingencies which might or might not occur next year. Unless some more satisfactory explanation was given than had been given by the hon. Gentleman a reduction ought to be moved. It was most unsatisfactory to put a number of men on the permanent staff, and thus create a new class of civil servants whose services were only required for a year, and whose salaries would have to be paid when their services were no longer needed. Under the circumstances he moved to reduce the Vote by £4,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum not exceeding £559,000 be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Whitley.*)

MR. GIBSON BOWLES pointed out that when the Government last year imposed the corn tax they imposed it as a permanent duty, and they very naturally provided an increased staff at the Customs for the collection of what was a rather onerous duty to collect. That was a necessary and inevitable step assuming that the Government intended to stick to their guns and make the corn tax a permanent one, but by some strange chance, during the absence of the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the illimitable veldt, the Government had come to the decision to rescind this tax. He did not complain of the decision, but there was this to be said: if the Government had determined to undo the corn tax they must also undo the charge which had been placed upon the country by the imposition of that tax. It was not sufficient for the Secretary of the Treasury to "hope" there would be a reduction. These Estimates were prepared in the autumn or winter of last year, and it was fair to assume that the Government had at that time arrived at the decision to rescind the corn duties, and it was not fair, as the hon. Gentleman, who was a fair-minded man, and who had remained a fair-minded man even after he went to the Treasury, would see, for the country to pay the cost of these gentlemen who were put on to collect the corn duty when the corn duty had ceased to exist. He was not surprised that a reduction had been moved. The hon. Member had stated that the sugar duty would require an increased staff this year by reason of the Sugar Convention. Why? And in what way? The decision of the Brussels Convention did not necessitate any additional men; on the contrary, fewer men would be required because the Sugar Convention prohibited the introduction of certain sugars into certain countries. The hon. Gentleman said that a greater superintendence of factories and places where sugar was manufactured in this country would be required and that these places would have to be placed under bond, but that was not a question of Customs officers. His belief had always been that that was a matter for the Excise. Customs officers could have nothing to do with a bonded system of inland manufactories, and therefore whatever bonded system was required, and whatever duties had to be collected, would have to be attended to by the Inland Revenue Department. He therefore anticipated the hon. Gentleman would agree, not to the reduction which had been moved by the hon Member opposite, but to a reasonable reduction representing the real reduction of the staff which had been rendered possible by the cessation of the corn duties.

MR. J. H. LEWIS (Flint Boroughs) asked how many extra officials had actually been appointed in consequence of the imposition of the corn duties, and the amount the country had to pay for their salaries. This information became of considerable importance to the Committee, having regard to the fact that the corn duty was not now to be a permanent duty. It would also be interesting to know what the "probable increase in duties soon to be expected," to which the hon Gentleman had alluded, were. If that information was given the Committee might be justified in voting in favour of this Vote.

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield) asked whether the custom still prevailed of destroying captured smuggled goods by burning or otherwise, and, if so, whether an alteration in that custom might not be made under which these goods might be sold for the public benefit. In the case of tobacco he asked that it might be supplied to the inmates of the workhouses, by whom, as everybody knew, a little tobacco was much appreciated.

MR. ELLIOT said the increase in the number of the staff owing to the corn duty was forty-six indoor and forty-seven outdoor officers. But what he desired to impress on the Committee was that it would be bad policy and bad economy to dismiss anyone on the established staff when there would be a considerable demand for their services after the 1st of September next. With regard to the question of seized smuggled goods his strong impression was that the method of destroying goods which had been alluded to had been put an end to.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES was understood to press for a reply to the point he had raised with reference to the men whose services—in consequence of the abandonment of the corn duty—would not be required.

MR. ELLIOT thought that the hon. Member was incorrect in supposing that in consequence of the abolition of the corn duty the services of all these men would not be required, or that their services would not be available, if required, in connection with the changes with regard to the importation of sugar. It was expected that their services would be so available.

Mr. NUSSEY (Pontefract) pointed out that the Estimates had been framed with the knowledge that the Sugar Convention was coming on, and would have to be provided for. He fully sympathised with the hon. Gentleman, who was in the difficult position of not knowing what might be the policy of the Government from day to day. The duty might be revived even in the present week, but as far as available information went, these forty-six men indoors and forty-seven men outdoors would have nothing whatever to do between now and September. The Departments concerned ought to be careful to ascertain whether a tax was to be permanent before they increased the staff by a large number of men.

Mr. MARKHAM, in view of the large amount of money lost by the Revenue owing to the manner in which invoices were made out for rebates on small coal, asked whether the Custom House officials had any means of ascertaining from the colliery companies the actual price at which the coal was sold. He would tell the hon. Gentleman how he evaded the tax himself. The price of small coal was 6s. f.o.b. If a foreign exporter came to him for a certain quantity of large and a certain quantity of small coal, he would make out the invoice for a certain amount of small coal at 5s. 11d., and the foreign exporter would pay 6d. per ton more for the large coal. By that means the exporter escaped paying the duty on the small coal, and thereby, if the quantity was 20,000 tons, put £1,000 into his pocket. The colliery company gained no advantage, but the authorities ought to look into the matter, as the tax was largely evaded in that manner. As one who had evaded the tax, and would evade it on every possible occasion, he thought steps should be taken so to frame the tax that it could not be thus evaded.

Mr. ELLIOT thought the Treasury ought to be much obliged to the hon. Member for his remarks. With regard to the men to whom reference had been made, it would be very hard for them to be dismissed at short notice. A great number of the men would be absorbed in the manner he had described.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee) said the hon. Gentleman misapprehended the point of the objection. Nobody desired to secure the dismissal of a number of officials. The Estimates were framed in November. Had the Government at that time decided to abolish the corn duty? If so, the Estimate was framed on that basis. But if the abolition had not then been decided upon, the Estimate was based on the continuance of the corn duty. That duty was now being abandoned; consequently the Estimate ought to be reduced.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES reminded the Committee that any unexpended balance of this Vote would be surrendered at the end of the financial year, so that if anything were saved on the salaries of these gentlemen it would be to the benefit of the Treasury. But what they could not be sure of was that anything would be saved. He doubted whether the hon. Gentleman was correct with regard to the transfer of the men from one duty to another. It had to be remembered, however, that the corn duty was imposed last year, and was to be taken off this. But was it to be re-imposed next year? They were given to understand that it was to be, and to that extent the hon. Gentleman had a case for the retention of these officials.

Mr. WHITLEY pointed out that the proposed reduction amounted to only one-eighth of the cost of collecting a duty which was to run for three months in a current financial year. The Motion did not involve the dismissal of the men. If the Financial Secretary was correct in saying they would be required in connection with the Sugar Convention it was the duty of the Government to bring in a Supplementary Estimate appointing them for that purpose. It was not right that the money should be taken under this Vote and the men employed subsequently for some other purpose. From the admissions of the hon. Gentleman himself he thought a case had been made out for the reduction.

Mr. ELLIOT said that with regard to the changes made necessary by the abolition of the corn duty the question was a very simple one, namely, the question of the best policy in the interests of economy and good administration. The question was what was the best thing to do? A great deal of work would have to be done in connection with the rebates. He thought the best policy was that which the Treasury proposed to adopt. In future the work would be done under the Customs Department. Personally he should like to see a larger reduction when things settled down. Naturally hon. Members felt that the arrangement was not altogether satisfactory, and it was not in itself desirable that when once a permanent duty was put on it should be shortly afterwards taken off. Whether it was right to put the tax on or take it off was not a matter to be discussed now.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): The hon. Gentleman neglects the point of view which was put before the Committee by my hon. friend near me and others. This is no question of dismissing individual men at all. These men who have been engaged in collecting the corn duty are not corn duty men *ad hoc*, if I may use the term; they are merely an addition to the staff necessitated by additional work. If that work is no longer required they can be employed on other work of the Department. If so, it will be unnecessary to make any additions to the Department. If these men are set free to take their share in the general work of the Department there ought to be some diminution of the expense, because no other new men will be required. It is not a question of leaving these men to destitution or of keeping them in idleness. I do not think it is at all unreasonable that there should be a reduction moved in these circumstances, for there is no hardship or difficulty in the matter whatever.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 37; Noes, 96. (Division List, No. 112.)

AYES.

Allen, Chas. P. (*Glos., Stroud*)
Bell, Richard
Blake, Edward
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Duncan, J. Hastings
Evans, Sir F. H. (*Maidstone*)
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (*Bristl, E*
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Jacoby, James Alfred
Kitson, Sir James
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (*Cornwall*)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leng, Sir John
Lewis, John Herbert
Markham, Arthur Basil
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Rea, Russell
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)
Rose, Charles Day
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Schwann, Charles E.
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Strachey, Sir Edward
Taylor, Theodore C. (*Radcliffe*)
Thomas, F. Freeman (*Hastings*
Thomson, F. W. (*York, W. R.*)
Tomkinson, James
Ure, Alexander
Wason, John Cathcart (*Orkney*)
Wilson, F.W. (*Norfolk, Mid*)
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Whitley and Mr. Toulmin.

NOES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (*Manch'r*
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Bignold, Arthur
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Bowles, Col. H. F. (*Middlesex*
Bowles, T. Gibson (*Lynn Regis*
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Campbell, Rt Hn J A (*Glasg.*)
Carew, James Laurence
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cavendish, V. C. W. (*Derbyshire*
Chamberlain, Rt Hn. J A (*Worc.*
Chaplin, Right Hon. Henry
Churchill, Winston Spencer
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Cranborne, Viscount
Crossley, Sir Savile
Dewar, Sir T. R. (*Tr. Haml'ts*
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
FitzGerald, Sir Robert Penrose-
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S. W.*
Galloway, William Johnson
Gardner, Ernest
Garfit, William
Gordon, Maj Evans (*Tr. Hmlts*
Gore, Hn. S. F. Ormsby- (*Linc*
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir John Eldon
Graham, Henry Robert
Hall, Edward Marshall

Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld.G.(*Midx*
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heath, James (*Staffs., N.W.*)
Heaton, John Henniker
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Hutton, John (*Yorks. N.R.*)
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (*Bristol, S*
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Loyd, Archie Kirkman
Macdona, John Cumming
M'Iver, Sir Lewis (*Edinburgh W*
Morgan, D. J. (*Walthamstow*)
Murray, Rt Hn, A Graham (*Bute*
Myers, William Henry
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Palmer, Walter (*Salisbury*)
Pease, H. Pike (*Darlington*)
Percy, Earl
Pretyman, Ernest George
Purvis, Robert
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Rattigan, Sir William Henry
Reid, James (*Greenock*)
Ridley, Hon M. W. (*Stalybridge*)
Ritchie, Rt Hon. Chas. Thomson
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Rothschild, Hon. L. Walter
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Harry S. (*Limehouse*)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (*Strand*
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stroyan, John
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Vincent, Sir Edgar (*Exeter*)
Walrond, Rt. Hn. Sir William H
Wilson John (*Glasgow*)
Wilson-Todd, Wm. H. (*Yorks*)
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

Original Question again proposed.

CAPTAIN NORTON drew attention to the wages of the body of officers known as Customs watchers. He explained that Customs watchers were officers who performed duties which were many years ago performed by those who were known as assistants or outdoor officers. These outdoor officers were paid something like £100 a year, but owing to the general increase of education throughout the country the Customs officials found that they were able to obtain the services of men of good character who were sufficiently well educated and responsible to perform the duties which were performed by these outdoor officers at a very much lower wage, and they wisely and properly, in the interest of the taxpayers, abolished that class. To that there could not be the slightest objection. His point was that they went too far, and that they were employing the Customs watchers at what he did not hesitate to call a sweating rate of wages for men in the area of the county of London. In addition to a certain amount of physical labour these men performed the very difficult and responsible duties known as tallying and locking. Therefore the class of men obtained for these positions must be men of character who were absolutely reliable. The Government had always obtained for this class of duty men who had served in the Army, Navy, police and fire brigades throughout the country. The majority of these men at one time held pensions from having been in the Army, Navy, or police. At one period they received a wage of less than 19s., but their wage was raised to 21s. His contention was that the Government had no right to take men who already had a pension and make use of that pension for the purpose of lowering their wages and thereby depriving others, who were in the labour market and had no such stand-by in the posts which they might occupy, of a fair wage. The Government was not justified in the face of the Fair Wages Resolution of this House in employing men at less than a living wage in consequence of the fact that they had pensions, which, after all, were in the shape of deferred pay or reward for duty done. Some time ago he brought the question of the pay of the Customs watchers before the Committee, and he was told that these men had little responsibility because they were under constant supervision. But he would point out that there was nothing to prevent a Customs watcher from entering into collusion with lightermen, and returning a lighter as containing 499 cases instead of 500 cases, of brandy, and thereby defrauding the public revenue. He did not say that it was done, but if a man was placed in a position in which he was able to do that, there was great temptation to do it when he was forced by the Government to live on what he called a starvation wage.

Take the case of locking warehouses, if any irregularity occurred in connection with the goods in these warehouses, it could never be detected until the whole of the goods had been cleared, and when the man concerned might be at the other end of the world. Therefore they required for that work men on whom they could rely. The various dock companies paid their lockers 25s. a week and gave certain extra wages when they worked under certain conditions. In 1898, when he brought this question first before the House, the then Financial Secretary to the Treasury had a consultation with him and the gentleman who was responsible for these particular offices. It was agreed to give these men certain concessions, but these were to a certain extent bogus concessions. Paragraph I of General Order 66, issued in 1900, which was for the purpose of meeting these men, said that one-fourth of the whole of the number may proceed by yearly increments of 1s. from the present minimum of 21s. to a maximum of 24s. a week. There were 600 of these men employed throughout the country, and half of that number were employed within the area of the county of London. They had to do with the Port of London, and it was more especially for these men that he pleaded. He admitted that a wage of 21s. in certain parts of the country, where house rent was from 3s. to 4s., was a better wage than 24s. in London, where a man was obliged to pay 7s. or 8s. for anything like decent lodgings. These men could not obtain lodgings in the neighbourhood of the docks where their labour was, and they were compelled to go a considerable distance afield. Although they could get houses at get-at-able distances near the field of their labours at a more moderate rate, the difficulty was not overcome. These men, owing to the peculiarity of their duties, which extended to nine hours out of the twenty-four, were, on account of the arrival of fruit and vegetables at an early hour in the morning, unable to get to their duties without paying railway and bus fares throughout the entire week. Therefore these men, although Government officials placed in responsible positions, were called upon to do work at less than was paid to scavengers in the various London boroughs, and at less than was received by even an ordinary docker, who had no responsibility at all. They were led to believe that they might rise to 24s., but he could inform the Committee that there was a watcher with twenty-two years service who was not in receipt of that amount. Those who had joined since August, 1896, could never obtain 24s., and had not up to the present obtained any increment. There were men with six years service without increment. These men had no complaints whatever recorded against them. The Customs watchers had been led to believe that, provided they performed their duties and were not unfavourably reported upon, they would rise automatically to the maximum of 24s., but they now found themselves in a position in which they were ruled out under the very order to which he had referred. These men were working at 21s., and had no hope of ever rising, while at the age of sixty they would be turned out of the service.

He would be glad to know also whether the Financial Secretary would consider the advisability of further extending the concession which was made to these men in reference to their uniform. On the occasion to which he had already referred, he pointed out that the only badge of office which these men had was a cap, and now, according to this order, they were to be annually supplied with a uniform jacket. He suggested that consideration should be given to the question whether they might not be given a complete uniform. In all foreign countries every man employed in any position under the Government, whatever his wages might be, was, at any-rate, given a respectable uniform. Apart from that, he would like the hon. Gentleman to say whether there was any reason why these men should not obtain a living wage. The hon. Gentleman's predecessor stated as a reason for not giving them a living wage the fact that they were not all able-bodied men. That could not be urged at the present moment. It was true that many years ago there was a certain number of old soldiers doing duty as watchers, and who, it was stated, had been taken on almost as a matter of charity. His contention was that it was the duty of the Government to employ the best men they could obtain, and to pay them the current rate of wages for that class of labour in the locality. Another objection which had been stated was that though their hours were nine per day, they were not employed continuously during that time. That was no answer to a man who had a wife and family to support on 21s. a week. He was there as an employee of the Customs, and he could not go away to earn money elsewhere. He asked that it should be made possible for those men against whom there was no complaint to rise to 24s. a week.

MR. ELLIOT said that this class of Customs watchers had been only started in 1896. Before that the work was done by men known as permanent labourers at a wage of 19s. a week. The work done by the watchers was of a purely mechanical kind—locking and watching doors. In 1900 their position was benefited. Their pay was increased, as was admitted by the hon. and gallant Member, and an increase was also made to their overtime wage. They were before that entirely without uniform; and for a long time they had only a cap, but now they had a jacket as well. Their case had been carefully gone into and considered as part of a system begun in 1896, and it had been since looked into and considerable benefits given to them. Some of them wished to be put on the establishment list; but there would be no difficulty in any of these men leaving at once and going where they would be more highly paid. He was told that there was a feeling amongst the men that if they were on the establishment system it would give them a right to a pension. He, however, on behalf of the Department, did not think that that was desirable, even in the interest of the men themselves. That right to a pension would limit their freedom of going anywhere else. There was no reason why the wages which had been so lately gone over should be again revised.

CAPTAIN NORTON said he could not accept at all what the hon. Member had said. These men did not exist in exactly the same category now as prior to 1900; whereas he had been dealing with their grievances for the last ten years. His contention had always been that these men had not a living wage, as also in regard to the men employed at Deptford and Woolwich; and the Government had no right to employ men at less than a living wage. That was the point at issue. It was true that some slight concession had been made to them in 1900, but the concession debarred the men from rising to a wage of 24s. a week. He begged to move the reduction of the Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question put, "That a sum, not exceeding £562,900, be granted for the said Service."—(*Captain Norton.*)

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 48; Noes, 110. (Division List No. 113.)

AYES.

Allen, Chas. P. (*Glos., Stroud*)
Bell, Richard
Blake, Edward
Burt, Thomas
Caldwell, James
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*
Doogan, P. C.
Duncan, J. Hastings
Evans, Sir F. H. (*Maidstone*)
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert J.
Harwood, George
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (*Bristl, E*
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Jacoby, James Alfred
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kitson, Sir James
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (*Cornwall*
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leamy, Edmund
Leng, Sir John
Lewis, John Herbert
Mappin, Sir Fredk. Thorpe
Markham, Arthur Basil
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Rea, Russell
Reid, Sir R. Threshie (*Dumfries*)
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)
Rose, Charles Day
Schwann, Charles E.
Scott, C. Prestwich (*Leigh*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Soares, Ernest J.
Strachey, Sir Edward
Taylor, Theo. C. (*Radcliffe*)
Thomas, F. Freeman (*Hastings*)
Thomson, F. W. (*York, W. R.*)
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Ure, Alexander
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Wilson, Chas. H. (*Hull, W.*)
Wilson, F. W. (*Norfolk, Mid*)
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Captain Norton and Mr Herbert Samuel

NOES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Aird, Sir John
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Austin, Sir John
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (*Manch'r*

Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Beach, Rt. Hon. Sir M. Hicks
Bignold, Arthur
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Bowles, Col. H. F. (*Middlesex*
Bowles, T. Gibson (*Lynn Regis*
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Carew, James Laurence
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cavendish, V. C. W. (*Derbyshire*
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Churchill, Winston Spencer
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Coddington, Sir William
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Cranborne, Viscount
Crossley, Sir Savile
Dewar, Sir T. R. (*Tr. Haml'ts*
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
FitzGerald, Sir Robt. Penrose
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Fyler, John Arthur
Galloway, William Johnson
Gardner, Ernest
Garfit, William
Gibbs, Hon. Vicary (*St. Albans*)
Gordon, Maj Evans (*Tr. Hmlts*
Gore, Hn. S. F. Ormsby- (*Linc*
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Graham, Henry Robert
Greene, W. Raymond (*Cambs*
Greville, Hon. Ronald
Hall. Edward Marshall
Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld. G. (*Midx*
Hamilton, Marq. of (*Londondy*
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Heath, James (*Staffs., N. W.*)
Heaton, John Henniker
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Hutton, John (*Yorks, N.R.*)
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (*Bristol, S*
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Francis William
Loyd, Archie Kirkman
Macdona, John Cumming
M'Iver, Sir Lewis (*Edinburgh W*
Morgan, D. J. (*Walthamstow*)
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Myers, William Henry
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Palmer, Walter (*Salisbury*)
Pease, H. Pike (*Darlington*)
Percy, Earl
Pretyman, Ernest George
Purvis, Robert
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Rattigan, Sir William Henry
Ridley, Hon. M. W. (*Stalybridge*
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Rothschild, Hon. Lionel Walter
Samuel, Harry S. (*Limehouse*)
Seton-Karr, Sir Henry
Smith, H C (*North'mb. Tyneside*
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw. M.
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Vincent, Sir Edgar (*Exeter*)
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Welby, Lt-Col A. C. E. (*Taunton*
Wharton, Rt. Hon. J. Lloyd
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, John (*Glasgow*)
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (*Yorks.*)
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

2. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £1,370,500, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Inland Revenue Department."

MR. CHARLES ALLEN (Gloucestershire, Stroud) said that he noticed that the number of men employed by the Department in 1901–2 was 5,778, in 1902–3, 5,886, and this year, 5,984. That was a considerable increase in the *personnel.* But the expense was increasing at a greater ratio. In 1901–2 it was £1,274,000, in 1902–3 £1,322,476, and this year £1,347,900. Both increases were very considerable; that in the *personnel* being the most important, as it could not be readily got rid of.

MR. ELLIOT said that the increases referred to were mainly due to the fact that the quinquennial assessment under Sections A and B of the Income Tax was taken, and that entailed an enormous amount of extra work. Increased taxation always meant a considerable increase in work, and consequently in expense.

MR. J. H. LEWIS said he wished to raise a question which affected a very large and very deserving class of ratepayers. He referred to persons who were entitled to abatements of their Income Tax. He had endeavoured from time to time to ascertain approximately how much those persons were entitled to. Last year they received about £330,000; but they were entitled to some millions. The fact of the matter was that a very large proportion of the people who were entitled to abatements never received them. It might be said that that was entirely their own fault; but he hardly thought that that was a sufficient answer. He feared that the officers of the Inland Revenue, although no doubt acting in the interests of the Treasury, were not too anxious to help persons who wished to obtain the abatements to which they were entitled. No one would wish, for instance, that a man with an income of £300 or £350 should not receive the exemption to which he was entitled. He would suggest to the Secretary to the Treasury that he should, through the usual channels, give instructions to the officers of the Inland Revenue to render every assistance in cases of that kind, and to make it as easy as possible for persons making claims to have them carried through. That was the very least that the Department might do. He hoped the hon. Gentleman would give the matter attention, with a view to having justice done to the class to which he referred.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said he hoped the hon. Gentleman would not do anything of the kind suggested. Abatements and exemptions were a most mischievous and improper system. The exemption granted to one person meant an extra imposition on another person. If all the incomes of the country were taxed, a 6d. Income Tax would do the work that a 1s. Income Tax now did; and it was only because a certain class were entitled to abatements and exemptions that other persons had to pay a 1s. instead of a 6d. Income Tax. Abatements and exemptions were now extended to incomes of £700, which was far beyond the limit which would justify any sort of abatement. To exempt poor persons from the Income Tax was a notion for which something could be said; but that a man with an income of £700 should not contribute his quota to direct taxation as well as the man with an income of £1,000 or £1,200 was absurd. The result of the system was to make it necessary to levy increased taxation on other subjects of the Crown. Further, the Inland Revenue was a tax-collecting Department; and the business of a tax-collecting Department was to collect taxes, not to encourage remissions. Therefore, when the hon. Gentleman opposite urged the Secretary to the Treasury to get his Department to give facilities for escaping the payment of taxation, he was proposing that the Department should betray its first duty to the State. If there was to be a recasting of the Income Tax, it should be entirely in the contrary direction to that suggested. His conviction was that even the poorest were not disposed to evade payment of a fair proportion of taxation. If exemptions and abatements caused certain persons to pay less and others to pay more than their proper proportion, the reform of the Income Tax should be in the direction of the diminution of the abatements and the disappearance of the exemptions. He wished to refer to the system of allowing poundages and percentages on the taxes collected. On page 40 of the Estimates there was a list of commuted allowances such as "Commuted Allowances in lieu of Poundage to Assessors and Collectors of Taxes." The proper way to pay public servants was not by percentages, but by fixed salaries. Payment by percentage was a false system. The best service was given for a fixed salary, such as the service rendered to the Navy or the Army. On page 40 also there was an item for statutory poundage to assessors and collectors of Income Tax; and a further item for allowances (chiefly to Excise officers) for collecting taxes. On page 39 there was an item for allowances to purchasing distributors in England and Ireland (5 per cent. and under on general stamps and 1 per cent. on postage stamps). The point to which he wished to direct the attention of the Secretary to the Treasury was that the true principle was to replace poundages and percentages by fixed allowances. He hoped to hear from the hon. Gentleman that it was the fixed intention of the Government to abandon gradually the system of paying public servants by percentages, which was a false and a vicious system; and he trusted the hon. Gentleman would give an assurance to that effect.

MR. ELLIOT said he was in entire agreement with a great deal of what had been said by his hon. friend the Member for King's Lynn; and already a large number of commutations had taken place. In Ireland, the old system was still, to some extent, adhered to; but the system was under consideration, and it was probable that some move would be made in the direction of assimilating the practice in Ireland to the better system which obtained in England. With reference to the percentages paid in England and Scotland, his impression was that they were paid to certain bankers, not to officials in the service of the State, in connection with foreign dividends. He was in entire agreement with the hon. Member for Flint Boroughs that the people referred to were entitled to abatement, and that being so every facility ought to be given to them to get back money which did not belong to the State, and which did belong to them. He would do his best to see that every facility should be given to the persons entitled to abatement to get it back.

*SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee) said he desired to elicit some further explanation from the hon. Gentleman on a subject of great interest to the legal fraternity and the people of Scotland. A few weeks ago it was stated in an evening journal that it was the intention of the Inland Revenue to centralise the collection of all death duties arising in Scotland in the city of Edinburgh. It was suggested that these duties, which had hitherto been collected by the Inland Revenue authorities in the large cities and towns of Scotland, were hereafter to be transmitted direct to the head office in Edinburgh. The objections to the proposal had been stated in a remonstrance of the Faculty of Procurators in Scotland. He had received copies of remonstrances from many sources, but the one from Glasgow epitomised the whole. That remonstrance pointed out that the proper way of discussing the figures was by personal interview, and that if it had to be done in Edinburgh by correspondence, it was likely to throw a considerable charge on the people. In the case of Glasgow, where they would have to send accounts to Edinburgh to be adjusted the solicitor would have personally to attend, or if it were done by correspondence the settlement of the duties would be indefinitely delayed and great expense thrown upon the public. It ought to be made clear that it was part of the duty of the local Inland Revenue officer to adjust the accounts in the district, although the ultimate review of the accounts could easily be left to the central office in Glasgow. He hoped the financial Secretary would be able to give an assurance which would remove any anxiety there was in Scotland in this regard. It appeared that the one great change proposed was that instead of the local stamp distributor accepting payment and giving the interim receipt the accounts must now be sent by him to the head office in Edinburgh for assessment before the duty was imposed. If that was all that was proposed and the local solicitors were not to be prevented, as hitherto, from arranging all matters with the local Inland Revenue officers the alarm and anxiety which now existed would be largely allayed. If not, he was afraid agitation would continue.

MR. ELLIOT said he did not understand that anything which the hon. Baronet had just said was for the benefit of the general public; but for the benefit of the solicitors and lawyers of Scotland. The alterations proposed did not apply to inventories. What had been done was to provide a new method to facilitate the accountable person getting the proper assessment made. He might go direct to Edinburgh, or, if he liked, to his nearest solicitor or Revenue official. That was entirely for himself.

MR. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple) drew attention to Item (e) which had increased from £266,000 last year to £307,600 in the present Estimates. He could not quite understand why that should be, because if the allowance or poundage allowed to collectors of Income Tax was calculated on the amount collected, it followed that the Income Tax, having been reduced from 1s. 3d. to 11d., this item should have also been decreased.

MR. ELLIOT pointed out that the general increase was due to the quinquennial assessment on Schedules A and B, and also to the fact that when there was an increased tax the Government had to pay more heavily for its collection.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said he desired to call attention to a not unimportant subject. In his belief there were enormous sums wasted by the system of collection adopted by the Inland Revenue, which refused direct payment to itself and desired payments to be made to subordinate officials. In 99 cases out of 100 the simplest and best way would be for the Inland Revenue to receive payment direct, as all that would then be necessary would be for the taxpayer to draw a cheque and send it through the post. Under Item (F) the taxpayer was asked to pay banker's commission (usually 2s. 6d. per cent.) on drafts drawn for the remittance of revenue by local bankers, or by traders and others in payment of duties, etc. That was really absurd, as no banker was required. The assessment having been made, the act of payment was the simplest thing in the world. But that was merely an illustration of how the system worked. In Item (E) there was a heading, "Guarantee premiums in respect of Collectors of Taxes," and therein lay a most extraordinary anomaly and grievance. It would scarcely be believed that it was impossible for a taxpayer to pay his taxes and be certain he had finally disposed of them. If the local tax collector, having demanded and received from a taxpayer the King's taxes, absconded with the money, the taxpayer could be called upon to pay a second, or even a third, time. If the money were sent direct to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue they would refuse to receive it. Under ordinary circumstances the local tax collector received his appointment from certain Commissioners who were nominally appointed by this House. In certain cases where those Commissioners did not, the Inland Revenue themselves appointed the collector, and being aware, perhaps from bitter experience, that tax collectors were not incapable of defaulting, they paid the premiums provided by this Vote to secure the honesty of their own collectors. He desired to extract from his hon. friend an undertaking that such a system would be adopted as would enable taxpayers to be certain they had finally paid their taxes. He would suggest that they should be enabled to pay the money direct to the Inland Revenue Commissioners. Possibly such a system would require an alteration of the law, but he thought the requisite amendment could be made without giving rise to much discussion. Either the Inland Revenue authorities should guarantee the honesty of their local collectors, or they should receive the taxes direct. In the hope of receiving such an undertaking as he had suggested, he moved to reduce the Vote by £200.

Mr. Gibson Bowles.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item E (Commuted Allowances, etc.) be reduced by £200."—(*Mr. Gibson Bowles.*)

MR. ELLIOT said that if a man had paid his taxes once it would be a very bad system which left him liable to be called upon to pay them a second, or even a third time. He, however, had not heard of any such cases. As a matter of ordinary justice it appeared to him that if a man had paid the money into the hands of a servant of the State it ought not to be possible for him to be called upon to pay again. Whether the suggestion of his hon. friend could be adopted he was unable to say, but he would certainly give an undertaking to look into the matter with a view to preventing a recurrence of such demands.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES asked leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

MR. SOARES, reverting to his objection to the increase in the item for commuted allowances in lieu of poundage to assessors and collectors of taxes, said he understood from the Secretary to the Treasury that this increase would not have been made had the Treasury known what the proposals of the Budget were to be. According to that principle if a tax were repealed altogether the Committee would still be asked to vote the entire cost of collecting that tax. It appeared to be a thoroughly bad system. Surely in such a case a revised Estimate ought to be presented. In order to get some further explanation he moved to reduce the Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum not exceeding £1,370,400, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Soares.*)

MR. ELLIOT said that when the Estimates were being framed in December the only thing that could be done was to have regard to the then existing taxation and the existing law. It would be impossible to frame them with regard to a Budget which would not be introduced until after Easter in the following year.

MR. SOARES asked why, when Estimates were found to be incorrect, fresh ones could not be issued.

MR. ELLIOT said it would be very inconvenient to recast the Estimates in the middle of the year. They must study the convenience of the House.

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) said the hon. Gentleman apparently misunderstood the question of commutation. It had nothing whatever to do with the amount of income tax to be collected. Hitherto certain men had been paid by poundage; it was now proposed to commute that poundage, and pay them by salary. The amount depended entirely on the number of men whose payments were to be commuted during the year, and had nothing whatever to do with the amount of income tax to be collected.

Question put—

The Committee divided: Ayes 47; Noes 129. (Division List No. 114.)

AYES.

Blake, Edward
Bryce, Right Hon. James
Burt, Thomas
Caldwell, James
Causton, Richard Knight
Craig, Robert Hunter(*Lanark*)
Duncan, J. Hastings
Emmott, Alfred
Evans, Saml. T. (*Glamorgan*)
Harwood, George
Hayne, Rt. Hn. Charles Seale-
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (*Brist'l, E*
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Jacoby, James Alfred
Jones, William (*Carnarvonsh.*
Kearley, Hudson, E.
Kitson, Sir James
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (*Cornwall*
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (*Accrington*)
Leng, Sir John
Lewis, John Herbert
Mappin, Sir Fredk. Thorpe
Markham, Arthur Basil
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Rea, Russell
Reid, Sir R. Threshie (*Dumfries*
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Schwann, Charles E.
Scott, C. Prestwich (*Leigh*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Strachey, Sir Edward
Taylor, Theo. C. (*Radcliffe*)
Thomas, F. Freeman (*Hastings*
Thomson, F. W. (*York, W.R*).
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Ure, Alexander
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Whittaker Thomas Palmer
Wilson, Chas. H. (*Hull, W.*)
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Soares and Mr. Allen.

NOES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Aird, Sir John
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Austin, Sir John
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Manch'r.*
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Beach, Rt. Hon. Sir M. Hicks
Beckett, Ernest William
Bignold, Arthur
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Bowles, T. Gibson (*Lynn Regis*)
Brassey, Albert
Butcher, John George
Carew, James Laurence
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cavendish, V. C. W. (*Derbyshire*
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Churchill, Winston Spencer
Cochrane, Hon. Thomas H. A. E.
Coddington, Sir William
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim S.*
Crossley, Sir Savile
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dimsdale, Rt. Hon. Sir Jos. C.
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Duke, Henry Edward
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
Fergusson, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (*Manc'r*
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Fyler, John Arthur
Galloway, William Johnson
Gardner, Ernest
Garfit, William
Gibbs, Hn. Vicary (*St. Albans*
Gordon, Maj. Evans (*T'r H'ml'ts*
Gore, Hn. S. F. Ormsby- (*Linc*
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Graham, Henry Robert
Greene, W. Raymond (*Cambs*
Greville, Hon. Ronald
Hamilton, Rt. Hn. Ld. G. (*Mid'x*
Hamilton, Marq. of (*Londondy*
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Heath, James (*Staffs., N.W.*)
Heaton, John Henniker
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry
Hutton, John (*Yorks, N.R.*)
Johnstone, Heywood
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*)
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (*Monm'th*)
Lawrence, Wm. F. (*Liverpool*
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (*Bristol, S.*)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Francis William
Loyd, Archie Kirkman
Macdona, John Cumming
Maconochie, A. W.
Manners, Lord Cecil
Maple, Sir John Blundell
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Murray, Col. Wyndham (*Bath*
Myers, William Henry

Nicol, Donald Ninian
Nolan,Col. John P.(*Galway,N.*
Palmer, Walter (*Salisbury*)
Pease, H. Pike (*Darlington*)
Percy, Earl
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Pretyman, Ernest George
Purvis, Robert
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Rattigan, Sir William Henry
Reid, James (*Greenock*)
Remnant, Jas. Farquharson
Ridley,Hon.M.W.(*Stalybridge*)
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Bothschild,Hon.LionelWalter
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Harry S. (*Limehouse*)
Seely,Maj.J.E.B.(*IsleofWight*
Seton-Karr, Sir Henry
Sinclair, Louis (*Romford*)
Smith,H.C(*Northum.Tyneside*
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Stroyan, John
Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw. M.
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Vincent, Sir Edgar (*Exeter*)
Walrond,Rt.Hn.SirWilliamH.
Welby,Lt.-Col.A.CE(*Taunton*
Welby, Sir Chas. G. E. (*Notts*)
Wharton, Rt. Hon. J. Lloyd
Williams, Colonel R. (*Dorset*)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, John (*Glasgow*)
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (*Yorks.*)
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
Sir Alexander Acland-Hoodand Mr. Anstruther.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

3. £536,790, to complete the sum for Post Office Packet Service.

MR. CALDWELL said that since the Vote was before the Committee the Postmaster-General had announced that he had appointed a Committee to go into the question of the renewal of contracts for the conveyance of mails to China. As regarded this Committee the Postmaster-General would remember that a year ago the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bristol in connection with these contracts, promised that he would appoint a Committee to inquire into the mail contracts and what the late Chancellor of the Exchequer referred to was a Committee of the House of Commons. By the existing law the Postmaster-General's Department had power to conclude a contract by land without the sanction of the House, and the only remedy hon. Members had was when the money came to be voted. In regard to the conveyance of mails by sea, the Postmaster-General had no such power. By the Standing Orders of this House a mail contract by sea was not operative until it had received the sanction of the House. That order was passed many years ago for a very good reason—namely, that vital interests were affected in connection with the conveyance of mails by sea. There were questions of competition between one shipowner and another, and there were great complaints at the time that the Standing Order was passed about influences being brought to bear in order to secure contracts for particular shipowners. Parliament had vested the approval of such contracts in the hands of this House, and every contract, before it could be acted upon, must have the sanction of the House by special Resolution. It was obvious that if the responsibility of concluding a contract was to rest with this House, the Committee appointed to inquire into the terms and conditions of the contract ought to be a Committee of this House in whom they would have confidence, and whose inquiry would have great weight when they came to decide the point. If the Committee to whom this matter was to be referred was merely to be an advisory Committee, leaving the House of Commons free afterwards to have a full investigation into the matter, then of course there was not so much to be said, but that would be a double inquiry. The constitution of the Committee, according to what he could gather from the newspapers, was open to very grave doubt. For instance, it was to consist of representatives of different Government Departments. The P. & O. contract alone involved a sum of £330,000. It had been stated that they were to have on the Committee a representative of the Navy. Why should there be a representative of the Navy in a matter of this kind? There was nothing about the Navy in the P. & O. contract, and it was stated in the House lately in regard to the cruisers that the Navy were hampered by having to take these mail ships as cruisers, whether suitable or not. The Admiralty had a special Committee of their own to investigate the question of which ought to be the cruisers for the Navy apart altogether from the mail contracts. That was proper on their part because the mail contract steamers were not necessarily suitable for cruisers. They were probably not the best, and we ought to have the best naval cruisers apart altogether from the question of carrying the mails. Looking at the list of P. & O. steamers, and Canadian Pacific steamers, they would find that there were none that could go above thirteen or fourteen knots an hour. We had practically nothing on our list to compare with the armed cruisers of Germany. Going to America the Germans had vessels which did twenty-two and twenty-three knots. We had nothing to compete with the German boats on the China station, or the Australian station. In a matter of this kind the mail contract should be dealt with entirely by itself, and the Admiralty should be left alone to take their choice of the whole British Merchant Shipping, and to determine what would be best in the interest of the Navy, without being trammelled by any terms of mail contract.

The First Lord of the Admiralty was no longer a director of the P. & O. Company, but at the same time he had been in that position and he possibly retained his holding. He did not know whether the First Lord of the Admiralty did so or not, but it was mere nonsense to say that a man who had been a director of a company, and who merely resigned when he came into a Government office, was an impartial man afterwards in dealing with a Government contract with that company. He was nothing of the kind. His interest would be with the company and those with whom he had been associated in the directorship. And all the more would he be able to give preferences when not a director. He ventured to say that the First Lord of the Admiralty as a director would be more careful not to act with what might appear to be favouritism to his company than when he was not a director. He thought it was unfortunate that in connection with such matters as these important contracts there should be a representative on this Committee of the Admiralty. This Committee was to inquire into the contract with the P. & O. Company, with which the head of the Admiralty was in such close relationship. It was to be remembered that at the present moment the mail contract was for taking 70,000 tons of mails. That was the total for which they got £330,000. That was as much as would pay 15 per cent. on the total capital of the P. & O. Company, which consisted of £2,300,000. This House was asked to trust the preliminary inquiry to a Committee consisting of officials, and only one Member of this House. If any one wanted information as to the manner in which this subject was treated, it could be found in the evidence of Sir Thomas Sutherland. It was shown that the Chairman was no match whatever for that gentleman. One point which Sir Thomas tried to make in comparing his subsidy with the German subsidy was that because the P. & O. vessels went through the Suez Canal so much was paid for canal dues. But the dues were not paid for the mails only; they were paid for the whole ship and the cargo. That was an illustration of how Sir Thomas managed to twist and turn the matter. He said that in taking the percentage per mile of the subsidy, they must take it from London and not from Brindisi only. Quite so; but if the ship started from London it had the trade to Egypt, and that ought to be taken into consideration. What were the terms of reference to this Committee? What were they to inquire about? He also wished to know whether any other people would be asked to tender for the contract besides the P. & O. Company. It came to this—that they gave the P. & O. Company the monopoly of the trade route to Bombay, and the result was that they killed off other British shipowners from competing, and left the competition to be done by the foreigner. They would not kill the foreigner by subsidising the P. & O. Company, but they would prevent the British shipowner from having an opportunity of competing. The Frenchman and the German and every foreigner would go on in spite of any subsidy we gave in that way.

He wished to know also about the railway. Were the Committee to inquire as to the terms under which the Siberian Railway would take letters? Obviously the Siberian Railway would be the nearest railway conveying letters to Shanghai, Hong-Kong, and Japan. At present they took letters in nineteen days to Pekin, and they took them to Port Arthur and Japan in less time. The British steamships going to Port Arthur only made ten to twelve knots an hour, while the Russian vessels did sixteen knots an hour, and of course Russia was competing with us. It was because of the slow P. & O. boats going to Bombay that there had been a demand for this new railway route which was so much spoken about. Then we were told that foreign countries were competing with us. Certainly they were competing with us, because this country and the P. & O. Company notoriously were behind. It used to be the fact that the P. & O. Company had the prestige of having the fastest ships. They were now nothing of the kind; they had lost that prestige altogether. The mails would be carried by a new route to the Persian Gulf and by the China route. There was another point. Why should not the mails be conveyed by the fast cruisers of the Fleet in the time of peace? These vessels steamed at the rate of twenty-two knots an hour, and in time of peace they did nothing, although we had to keep them in repair with their full complement of officers and men. At any rate, why should not these fast cruisers convey the mails to Bombay instead of employing slow thirteen and fourteen knot P. & O. boats? Would that matter be referred to the Committee?

Then he came to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's contract for conveying mails from this country to Hong-Kong viâ Halifax in winter, and Quebec in summer, through Canada to Vancouver, and thence by the Empress line of steamers to Yokohama and Shanghai. That contract was entered into in 1889 for a period of ten years, and its conditions were very important. It should be remembered that this country did not make a contract to a foreign State but only to its own territory. Hong-Kong was our own territory, but Shanghai was not; it was only a Treaty Port. Therefore the contract ended at Hong-Kong. It was important to keep this in mind, because penalties were not exacted upon failure of arrival at Yokohama or Shanghai, where they might be as late as they liked so long as the ships arrived at Hong-Kong up to the contract time. The contract was for a mail service between this country and Hong-Kong by the route he had described, once in every four weeks in each direction, and the subsidy was £60,000 a year. Of this sum the Canadian Government provided £15,000, but for that contribution Canada got value because it gave them a mail service to Japan and China, but as regarded the British Government the service was practically of no value whatever since they already had the P. and O. contracts to carry the mails to Shanghai, Hong-Kong, and Yokohama. The cost of the mails from this country to Canada was £500 additional. The remaining £45,000 was divided into two portions—£7,312 to be paid by the Admiralty for the mails to their cruisers, and £37,688 by the British Post Office. Moreover, there was this peculiar point about this contract. A service of steamers was not in existence at the time the contract was entered into. That was not usual. The Post Office often made the excuse for renewing contracts with existing companies and not entertaining offers by new companies that the latter had not then in existence quick speed steamers. The contract was given to the Canadian Pacific Company before their ships were built. At that time great pressure was brought to bear on the Government in regard to the contract. The Secretary to the Treasury stated that he had received a letter to be forwarded to the Prime Minister signed by upwards of 300 Members of Parliament in favour of a subsidy to the Canadian Pacific Company. He remembered the letter perfectly well, in which it was said that this was going to be a competitive service with the P. and O., that it would be a faster route, and that it would bring down the P. and O. rates. The Treasury Minute of 18th July, 1889, said—

> "Her Majesty's Government considered the scheme as a whole, offering as it does direct communication entirely through British Territory, and an alternative route to the East, desirable in the interests of the Empire, apart from postal considerations, and under these circumstances my Lords again took the question into consideration. Though the scheme is not justifiable upon postal reasons alone, it offers an alternative service which saves several days as compared with the Suez route, and it is therefore of considerable value from a postal point of view. It has the land transit lying wholly within British Territory, and as a Military route it is held by the Naval and Military Authorities to be of the highest importance."

They never gave the House of Commons any reason why.

"The offer of the company to construct mail steamers which could be employed by the Admiralty as armed cruisers in case of need, also accords with the policy already adopted in the case of certain other large steamship companies."

The Treasury Minute further stated what he should show had been absolutely falsified—

"A sum of £2,165 a year now paid to France and Italy for the conveyance of the China and Japan mails by other routes may perhaps be saved. On the other hand, the cost of carrying the mails across the Atlantic may amount to £650 a year. The Canadian Pacific Railway will present an alternative route for Australian and New Zealand mails. At present these mails when sent *viâ* America travel *viâ* New York and San Francisco and a specially high rate is paid for the United States land transit. Under the proposed contract it will be possible to send them *viâ* Quebec or Halifax and Vancouver on payment of the ordinary postal union rates of transit to the Canadian Post Office, and possibly the mail route *viâ* the Pacific to Australia will be diverted from San Francisco to Vancouver."

The optimism with regard to the mails to Australia and New Zealand had not been realised, for what had been the result? He put a question to the Postmaster-General as to what was the saving of time by the Vancouver as compared with the San Francisco route. Here was the answer he got on 24th February, 1903—

"The approximate time occupied in the transit of correspondence from London to Sydney *viâ* Vancouver is thirty-eight days, and *viâ* San Francisco thirty-four days."

So that the mails had not been diverted from San Francisco to Vancouver as had been predicted. Now, observe how it was that everything was magnified as to the importance of this route, and how the advantages to be obtained from it were the inducing causes for granting the subsidy. Whilst the Treasury Minute of July, 1889, stated that the Canadian Pacific route—

"Offers an alternative service which saves several days as compared with the Suez route,"

the Secretary of the Treasury was compelled, in answer to a Question put by Sir George Campbell on 15th August, 1889, to admit—

"That in the desire to be concise the Treasury Minute is not so clear as it might be; the saving of time referred to is really on certain sections of the line—viz., between London and Shanghai and London and Yokohama."

They were told in this revised answer that the mails from London to Hong-Kong would take the same average time (thirty-five days) by the Vancouver route as by the Suez route; that in the case of Shanghai there would be a saving of eight and a half days by the Vancouver route as compared with the Suez route, whilst as regarded Yokohama there would be a saving of from fifteen to eighteen days. It was on the faith of that that the contract was entered into.

How completely even this modified saving of time by the Vancouver route has been falsified by actual working out in practice, was shown by a reference to the Post Office Guide for January, 1903. It gave the approximate time occupied in course of post from London to Hong-Kong as forty days *viâ* Vancouver, and only twenty-nine days *viâ* Brindisi; or a saving by Suez of eleven days instead of occupying the same time as in 1889. In like manner as regarded Shanghai, the time occupied was given as thirty-seven days *viâ* Vancouver and only thirty-two days eighteen hours in the case of Suez, or a saving by the Suez route of four days six hours instead of, as alleged in 1889, a saving of eight and a half days by the Vancouver route. In the case of Yokohama, the Postal Guide gives thirty-two days *viâ* Vancouver as against thirty-eight days *viâ* Suez, a saving in the case of Vancouver of only six days instead of, as alleged in 1889, a saving of from fifteen to eighteen days. So far, therefore, as any postal facilities to Hong-Kong and Shanghai were concerned, the Canadian Pacific route had been mere bunkum. He had asked the Postmaster-General how many letters we got by that route—was it one, two or three, but he could not tell. The Postal Guide further brought out the fact that there were no less than six separate departures of mails every twenty-eight days by the Suez route, whilst there was only one departure every four weeks under the contract with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. Thus, in January, 1903, mails were despatched *viâ* Brindisi on the 2nd, 16th, and 30th; by the French Packet on the 9th and 23rd; and by the German Packet on the 6th and 20th; while they were only sent *viâ* the Vancouver route on the 8th. Accordingly, mails sent from London by the French Packet on 9th January arrived at Hong-Kong and Shanghai before the letters which left London *viâ* Vancouver the day previously. Even letters sent from London by the Brindisi route on 16th January arrived at Hong-Kong before the letters which left London on 8th January *viâ* Vancouver. So far as regarded Yokohama, there was a nominal saving *viâ* Vancouver route of six days, but it had to be borne in mind (1) that there was no postal contract by the Suez route to Yokohama, and that by proper arrangement this interval might be considerably reduced; and (2) that *viâ* Vancouver there was only one mail every twenty-eight days, whereas there were six mails every twenty-eight days *âvi* Suez, so that, even as regarded Yokohama, only those letters posted on the day of despatch of the mail *viâ* Vancouver, or within four or five days previously could possibly get any benefit. They did not subsidise vessels in the interests of foreign countries, but in the interests of the British colonies. The colonies gave contributions towards the mail contracts, but no contribution was received, for instance, from Japan. One mail a month was worth nothing. If a man were even one day late a monthly mail was of no practical value to him. There was only one mail in twenty-eight days by the Canadian Pacific route; and it would therefore be seen that, from a postal point of view, that route was of no practical advantage whatever, and effected no saving as far as this country was concerned.

The Canadian Pacific Railway promised to put on a fast mail service between this country and Canada, but that service had not been put on. The Treasury Minute of the 18th of July, 1889, said—

> "Some difficulty was felt with regard to the Atlantic portion of the line, the control of which is entirely in the hands of the Dominion Government. Satisfactory assurances were, however, given by that Government that the necessary acceleration of the service should be secured, and after much negotiation the terms of a contract were agreed upon."

That assurance was never carried out; there was never any attempt to carry it out. For ten years, therefore, the Government had been working on a footing of not getting the value which had been promised to them. During that period the British Government had been fooled; and now, at the end of it, it was proposed to renew the contract for five years, during which the Government would continue to be fooled. The Postmaster-General might say that it was not a question of postal matters alone, and that there were other considerations—naval and military considerations. He would deal with that. In the original contract it was stated that, if officers and men had to be despatched to Hong Kong or China there would be a considerable saving of time by the Vancouver route. Accordingly, in the original contract, there were clauses under which—

> "The Company agree to convey troops on service at cost, the word 'troops,' including naval and military officers, seamen, marines, etc., including accommodation in colonist sleeping carriage, by rail, £16 4s. per man to and from Halifax, non-commissioned officers £20 13s. 11d., second class, and commissioned officers £31 4s. 8d., first class. Rates to apply to detachments of fifty or upwards and to include all accommodation by land and sea, meals and rations. Government stores, not exceeding fifty tons in any one consignment, from Halifax to Hong Kong at cost; the cost by railway being estimated at one halfpenny per ton weight per mile, and the cost by sea at nothing beyond the charge of 4s. per ton for loading and discharging; and stores exceeding fifty tons in weight at the lowest tariff rates charged to the public at the time of shipment."

Those were the naval and military advantages which were considered to be very important to this country, but who would ever think of sending troops to China by the Vancouver route. They would have to embark at Liverpool for Halifax, and on arrival they would have to travel five or six days by train to Vancouver, where they would detrain and embark on board ship for Hong-Kong, and arrive there later than if they had proceeded direct from Southampton without any changing. Those clauses were, however, eliminated from the new contract altogether, for the simple reason, of course, that the Government found there would be no advantage in sending men by that route. The new contract provided for any number of naval, military or civil officers in the service of His Majesty, not exceeding eight in the first-class saloon, four in the second-class, and ten in the third class. But the passage money was to be the same as that charged by the Company for ordinary passengers of the same class. Where was the need for putting such a provision into the contract? Why should there be any restriction as long as the Government were willing to pay the ordinary rates? Further, it was provided that the Company was to receive on behalf of the Admiralty small packages at the lowest rate of freight charged by the Company for private goods of a similar character and description. Under the original contract there was a provision for cheap fares; but that had now been dropped out, because it was found that the route was too long and involved too many changes. The Canadian Pacific Company befooled the Government for ten years; they now induced the Government to allow themselves to be befooled for another five years; and at the end of that period it would be found that the speed would not be one whit greater than it was at present. When the contract was before the House of Commons, and when he proposed that it be referred to a Committee, a number of canards appeared in the newspapers stating that the route to Yokohama could be covered in twenty-one days. That was actually done on one occasion; but it was merely an advertisement journey. They could never run a twenty-two knot service to Canada; it was too far north, and if they could it would be impossible to compete with the route to New York.

Then, with regard to the Admiralty subsidy of £7,312 in respect of these vessels being cruisers. These vessels were worth nothing as cruisers. They could not go more than fourteen knots an hour, and at that pace they would have to have armed cruisers to protect them, and vessels to carry coal for them, whereas Germany had cruisers which could go at twenty and twenty-one knots, as indeed had we. It had also been said that if the Suez Canal were to be blocked at any time it might be convenient to have Vancouver as a station. It was inconceivable that the Suez Canal could be blocked, but if it were the P. and O. Mail Fleet would be cut in two. Half of it would be in Chinese waters and half this side, and that part in Chinese waters could be easily diverted if necessary to Vancouver, while the other portion could go to Canada. This was not a question of benefiting Canada but of benefiting the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. The shares of the Canadian Pacific Railway on the 5th February, 1889, were selling at 54, and on the 15th of the following August, after the contract was signed, they were selling at 63½. Why on earth was this contract renewed for another five years? When the Siberian Railway was completed and arrangements made with its owners to carry the mails they would reach Japan and Shanghai in about fourteen days, and no mails would go by these boats at all. So far as a quick service to Canada was concerned that had yet to be obtained, yet the only reason of this contract was to obtain an accelerated service. Did the Postmaster-General imagine that there was the slightest possible chance in the future of deriving any benefit from the renewal of this contract? When the Siberian Railway was completed they could not hope to compete with it. For ten years the Government had been fooled with the promise of an accelerated service and, not satisfied with that, the Government had renewed the contract for the purpose of being befooled for another five years.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) entirely endorsed what the hon. Gentleman had said with regard to the carriage of mails, but he was not in agreement with him in all his arguments. In his opinion these mail services should be charged not to the Post Office but to the Admiralty. We voted this money first to establish our supremacy on the sea, secondly to establish an all British route, and lastly for carrying mails. We paid for our mails 3s. a lb., because they were carried in British ships. On foreign ships they were carried at 1s. 8d. a lb. We were, in his opinion, sailing under false colours. He hoped the Postmaster-General would carefully examine this question of mail subsidies. We were paying £60,000 a year to Canada and were glad to do so, but it was absurd to say it was for the purpose of carrying the mails. We paid it to maintain British supremacy. We also paid £200,000 a year to India, and the whole postage to and from India did not amount to half the sum. Then why saddle the Post Office with the cost? The Australian people are framing their contract in such a way as to insist that the vessels should be so built that a large portion of them should be reserved for the carriage of frozen butter and frozen meat. The Members of the House of Commons were anxious that those subsidies should be continued, but they were not anxious that they should fraudulently be placed on the Post Office Vote. The mails to America were a source of continual annoyance, because, although we were paying this large sum of £137,000 per annum, faster vessels travelled to America. He hoped his right hon. friend would be able to assure the Committee that a better state of things would prevail in future. The Returns moved for by the hon Member for Dundee had to some extent opened their eyes. It was because the Department were wanting in honesty in refusing to face the fact that they were paying the subsidies for purposes other than the carriage of mails, that they had fallen into their present position, but he doubted whether, strong as the Postmaster-General was, he would be strong enough to break through the traditions with which he was hampered in this matter.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.), dealing first with the question as to the Committee he had appointed, said that the two years notice given on January 31 of this year to the P. and O. Company to terminate the mail contract was given at the request of certain Colonial and other Administrations who were parties to the contract. The Australasian Administrations in particular preferred the request; but practically every Administration interested in the contract and contributing towards the service desired some changes. Speaking generally, the changes desired were greater speed and a smaller cost. These changes were equally desired by the British Post Office, but it must be a matter for negotiation and consideration how far success in these directions could be achieved. A service in which so many different Administrations were interested was a matter of some complication, and his desire to be advised by people with greater knowledge than he possessed as to how these various interests could best be met, would be readily understood. He had, therefore, appointed the Committee, and he had selected the hon. Member for Aston Manor to be the chairman, not only in view of the interest he had taken in the subject, but because of his experience as chairman of the Committee on the effect of subsidies on British shipping and British trade. There was a unanimous opinion that he had conducted that Committee's deliberations with great skill and fairness, and he had acquired experience in that way which would be valuable to the Mail Contract Committee. On the Committee he had placed representatives of the Post Office, and he had invited the Colonial Office and the India Office to nominate representatives specially to look after the interests of Indian and Colonial Administrations. He had also invited the Admiralty to name an Admiralty representative—and they had, as a matter of fact, named two—in order that Admiralty interests might not be overlooked, and that the harmonious co-operation of the different Departments of Government concerned might be secured. He regretted the suggestion that because the First Lord of the Admiralty was, some years ago, a P. & O. director, this would make it impossible for any Admiralty official to sit on this Committee with an open and impartial mind. This was a large extension of anything that had ever been said concerning the position of Ministers as directors, and one which no authority other than the hon. Member for Mid Lanark was likely to approve.

The Report of the Admiralty Committee on the use that might be made of merchant cruisers had not been presented to the House; but one of the points particularly emphasised by the evidence they took was the desirability of a better communication between the Admiralty and the Post Office in regard to these contracts. He entirely shared that view, and thought it only reasonable and business-like—in fact, common sense—that the Government should obtain the advantages to be secured by negotiating as far as possible as a whole, and that the Admiralty should be associated with other departments in the consideration of a contract in which they had a great interest. He agreed that the Admiralty should be unhampered in their choice of mercantile cruisers by considerations which were pre-eminently the business of the Postmaster-General; but that was not a reason why the Postmaster-General, in making a big contract of this kind, should neglect Admiralty interests altogether, or exclude Admiralty interests from consideration. It was not for the Postmaster-General to decide whether any ship should be used as a mercantile cruiser; but it was right that he should assure himself whether any condition useful to the Admiralty might be inserted in the mail contract, and whether any subsidy could be paid in respect of any naval advantages which the Admiralty might obtain, at the same time as the Postmaster-General was arranging for the conveyance of the mails. The reference to the Committee for which the hon. Member for Mid Lanark had asked had already been published. He had not the exact terms with him, but substantially it was a simple reference requesting them to consider what provision should be made for the mail service to the East and Australia on the expiration of the present contract. They would, of course, have to consider what alternatives to the present method of carrying the mails were available, and whether the opening of new routes and other facilities which had come into existence since the present contract was concluded should alter the conditions of carriage in any new contract. But he did not propose to ask them to consider the suggestion of the hon. Member that cruisers be employed in leisure times as ordinary mail ships. To that he would anticipate the strongest opposition from the Admiralty, and he did not think anyone acquainted with the Admiralty would associate himself with the hon. Member in that proposal. While it was in accordance with precedent that such a Committee as he had appointed should be called together, it would, of course, be for the Postmaster-General and other Ministers concerned, and especially for the Treasury, to consider carefully any Report which they might present.

The hon. Member had referred to a promise made by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer of a wider inquiry into the question of mail subsidies. He was unaware of that promise, but if the hon. Member would give him the reference, he would look the matter up and see what it was. Personally, as at present advised, he did not think that a Committee of the House to look into mail contracts in general was required, or was likely to get much new information or to render any useful service. He was quite willing to consider what the hon. Member might have to say in the matter. Of course if there had been a definite pledge given he should be anxious to redeem it, but, so far as his own view was concerned, he thought that, if there was an inter-departmental Committee on the lines he had indicated to consider the conditions of the new contract for the mail service to the East and Australia, it would be possible to put the House in possession of full information; and, as the hon. Member had said, no such contract could be made binding for a term of years without the assent of the House being given to it. A big question had arisen in connection with the Australian contract to which he did not wish to do more than allude at the present time, as it was still under discussion. It might, however, appear as if he were trying to withhold information from the Committee if he passed by the subject without reference. It was known to hon. Members through statements which had appeared in the Press that the Government of the Australian Commonwealth had desired the insertion in any new contract to which they were a party of a provision directed against the employment of coloured labour on the mail ships. His Majesty's Government had felt themselves precluded now, as on previous occasions, from assenting to any stipulation for the exclusion of a class of His Majesty's subjects. He need scarcely say that if it would be, as in his opinion it would be, impossible for his Majesty's Government to assent to such a stipulation in any contract, it was doubly impossible in a contract to which the Indian Government was also a party. He only mentioned this to the Committee, because his silence might have the appearance of a desire to shirk the question.

With regard to the service from Vancouver across the Pacific, which was worked in connection with the Canadian Pacific Railway, he need say the less, as the hon. Gentleman opposite had given the Committee a very full and detailed account of the circumstances in which the contract had arisen. To this question the hon. Gentleman opposite had devoted the greater part of his speech, and his hon. friend the Member for Canterbury had especially made it the text of his sermon that the Post Office Vote bore a burden which it was not fair to place there. He did not wish to challenge, in the main, the hon. Member's statement of facts; but he demurred to the statement that, in connection with this contract, the Government were conferring a favour upon the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, or that they had been fooled by the company, or that the company had been too sharp for His Majesty's Government. The contract was entered into as a great Imperial service by British ships at the urgent request of the Dominion Government, and not for the purpose of pleasing the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. If the Government had a desire to please anybody when this contract was made, it was to please the Dominion Government. It was quite true that the expectations with which the service was established had not been fulfilled. In one respect only the hon. Member had not given quite a fair account to the Committee. He had said that since this contract was made, the P. and O. Company's service, providing an alternative route to the East, had been quickened, so that this route, which would otherwise have been the shorter route to certain places, had lost its advantage even in regard to nearly all those places.

Mr. CALDWELL: Did this occur before the renewal?

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that was the case; but the hon. Gentleman had quoted so much from the Minute of 1889, that he had thought it only fair to show that a quickening was secured on the alternative route. It was perfectly true that we had failed to obtain hitherto any fast Atlantic service in connection with this route, such as had been hoped for, and such as he still hoped to see established. The Canadian Government had from time to time made efforts to secure the establishment of such a service. Those efforts had not hitherto been successful, but it was within the knowledge of the Committee that quite recently they had called for fresh offers for a fast Atlantic service between this country and Canada. They had not yet communicated the result of any such offers to His Majesty's Government, and, in the meantime, it was perfectly true to say that this service, as it at present existed, was of very little advantage as a mail service. We made a very small use of it, and the revenue which was obtained from letters and packages which went that way bore no proportion to the subsidy which had to be paid for the service. In his opinion, His Majesty's Government, in their anxiety to meet the wishes of Canada and give Canada every opportunity for facilitating the establishment of this fast Atlantic service, had gone to the utmost limits to which they could be expected to go, in assenting to the renewal of the contract for five years, in the hope that by that time the establishment of an Atlantic service might become an accomplished fact, and that we might then get a further quickening on the Pacific side, and soon make this route a route of real value. If these results were not achieved in the further interval which was left, he did not think it likely that whoever might be then responsible at the Treasury or Post Office would be inclined to concur in any further extension of the contract on its present basis. He did not agree, however, that we had obtained no advantage from the contract. It was some advantage to have this alternative route, even though it was not a very effective route in the piping times of peace; and it was some advantage to have the British Marine represented in the North Pacific, and to prevent the trade in those parts passing away from the British Mercantile Marine. It was an advantage, at any rate, in the view of the Admiralty, to have the whole of these ships as mercantile cruisers, for which they were willing to make a contribution of £7,312, which represented their contribution to the total cost of the service for this route for the call they would have upon the ships. The hon. Member opposite said those ships were very slow. No doubt they were slow contrasted with the Atlantic greyhounds, but their value to the Admiralty in certain conditions would depend, not on that comparison, but on the speed of other vessels cruising in the same waters. They were more valuable in the North Pacific than in the North Atlantic amongst very fast ships.

MR. CALDWELL: But there are not many British ships in the North Pacific.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that although that might be true it was nevertheless worth while to have the British flag represented in those waters. Sometimes it was necessary to lay out one's money for a return which would not be immediate. It must be borne in mind by the Committee in considering this question of mail contracts that it involved not merely the conveyance of a certain bulk of mails between certain ports, but the running of a service in which vessels should start at fixed dates at a given time with or without passengers or cargo, with return at a given time and no waiting for cargo; and this regularity of service, which prevented the turning aside to obtain a cargo from other sources, had to be paid for. Under such circumstances it was not altogether fair to divide the amount of subsidy paid to the P. and O. or the Pacific Company, or to the Cunard or White Star line by the amount of mails carried, working it out and saying they might be carried cheaper in foreign ships. Possibly that might be so; but we had the advantage of the regular service, upon which we could rely, and so far as he was concerned he preferred wherever it was possible to send British mails by British ships. He went a step further. He did not altogether agree with the hon. Member that it was wrong to include the packet service Votes among the Post Office Votes. It was true that beyond the appropriations in aid they might serve a great national interest altogether outside the Post Office; but he did not know under what better classification the service could be put. As each contract came up for consideration the Department did its best to secure the most advantageous terms in speed, regularity, and convenience of service; but the conditions were so widely different, the circumstances under which one contract was carried out were so entirely different from those which existed in reference to another contract, that each must be judged on its merits and examined by itself, and there would be no advantage in having them all thrown together into one pot to be boiled up and considered by the House of Commons. He had dealt with the points raised, and as there had been considerable discussion on a previous occasion he hoped the Committee would agree to pass on to the telegraph Vote, upon which there had not yet been any discussion.

MR. CALDWELL said he had not moved a reduction of the Vote, and did not wish to do so, being quite satisfied that the matter would receive the personal attention of the Postmaster-General. He put more faith in the right hon. Gentleman's own personal attention than in his Committee. There was no doubt that the contracts referred to were two of the most important the British Government had to offer. He hoped, therefore, matters would be carefully adjusted before the contracts were entered into. He was satisfied with the answer given; and only desired to refer to the necessity for making the contracts for short periods, so that the service should obtain full advantage of the improvements in speed and other developments. In no case should a contract be entered into for more than five years.

Vote agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,549,430, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and working expenses of the Post Office Telegraph Service.

*MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.) asked whether the Postmaster-General had appointed the Committee to inquire into the grievances of certain Post Office employees, and whether he could give the names of the gentlemen who are to constitute the committee.

*MR HENNIKER HEATON with reluctance called attention to a number of details in relation to the service, upon which he suggested reforms should be instituted. In the first place the large and increasing loss on the telegraph service called for inquiry; no business men could be satisfied with the present state of affairs. The loss in the past year he estimated at £1,000,000, and probably it was more. There were 90.000,000 telegrams sent in the year, and on 74,000,000 of these the loss was 4½d. each. He thought it was due to the Committee that they should know whether there was to be a limit to this loss, or whether it would continue to increase. His right hon. friend had said that the reasons for the enormous loss in the telegraph service were perfectly well known, but they differed as to the reasons which caused the loss, and the whole country was waiting for an explanation of this state of matters. He called attention to this question some time ago and the Postmaster-General endeavoured to make some reform. The only thing that was done was to issue an order to postmasters not to give blotting-paper. The right hon. Gentleman might have effected a saving in connection with the cost of telegram forms and envelopes. Ninety million telegram forms were used, but he found that the supply was about 300,000,000. There must be a great loss in that direction. He had always held that the cables ought to be purchased by the Government; he meant the cables connecting this country with all parts of the Empire. At present the cable companies were making a very good thing out of their services. It might not be known to the Committee that we spent £4,000,000 a year in cabling to various parts of the Empire and to foreign countries, and only £1,000,000 in postage, that is, four times more on telegraphing than on postage to the colonies and foreign countries. On the other hand, we spent in England £3,500,000 on telegrams, and £15,000,000 on postage. There was a great deal to be desired in the way of reform in connection with the telegraph tariffs to various parts of the world. The rate throughout Great Britain and Ireland was only a half-penny a word. The rate throughout France was less than a halfpenny a word, and he therefore thought that the rate to France ought not to be more than one penny a word. The Postmaster-General admitted the other day that a very large profit was made on the telegraph service to France. Chambers of Commerce and other public bodies interested in obtaining cheap communication between this country and France were anxious that the rates should be cut down. But the tariff was worse for telegraphic communication with other countries on the Continent. For instance, the charge for a message from here to Spain was 3½d. per word, but from Germany to Spain it was only 2½d. a word, although the German cable had to pass our door. He would like the right hon. the Postmaster-General to explain these anomalies, and say whether he intended to move in the matter of their reform. Again, the rate from this country to the Russian frontier was only 2d. a word, but into Russia itself it was 5d. per word. The rate from St. Petersburg to Vladivostock was 4½d. a word, but from England to Vladivostock it was 2s. 7d. a word. The right hon. the Postmaster-General should hold a meeting with the Postmasters-General of all the countries on the Continent and devise a scheme by which through telegraphic rates should never exceed the combined inland rates of the countries through which the messages pass. That, he thought, was a common-sense suggestion, and if carried out it would give intense satisfaction to the commercial community. He understood that the Postmasters-General of Belgium, Holland, France, Germany, Italy and other countries were most anxious to come to some arrangement on this matter, and with the advent of a new Postmaster-General in this country he trusted they would be able to make both the postal and telegraphic communications between Great Britain and the Continent as cheap as possible. The telegraphic rate to Egypt was 1s. 7d. a word, which was most unjustifiable, and he was sure that it could be not unprofitably reduced to 6d. a word.

He invited the attention of the Postmaster-General to the enormous charges for telephonic communication. The charge for a three minutes conversation between London and Paris was 8s., and 16s. for a six minutes conversation. That, he thought, was monstrous; it was far too high, as indeed had been admitted by the Postmaster-General himself. Statistics should be furnished showing the revenue and the expenditure on the telephonic service; and he was confident it would be demonstrated that the rate might be reduced from 8s. to 2s. 6d. for a three minutes conversation between London and Paris or London and Brussels. He believed hon. Members would also agree with him that telephonic communication between various parts of this country over the Trunk lines was much too high. A few weeks ago he had had a long conversation with the most progressive, able and intelligent Postmaster-General of Italy, His Excellency Signor Gallimberti, who had pointed out to him how the system of communication in Italy compared with this country. If the right hon. Gentleman would pay a visit during his holiday to Rome, and other Italian cities, he might learn a lesson in regard to charges both for telephonic and telegraphic communication. For instance, in Rome a telegraph message of fifteen to eighteen words only cost 5d., as against twelve words for 6d. in this country. Turning to another question, he had had hundreds of letters complaining of telegraphic blunders made by ignorant clerks in his right hon. friend's Department. In one case a man incurred a loss of £1,500, and was driven into the Bankruptcy Court through the blunder of a telegraphic clerk; and there were numerous other instances of people who had lost large sums of money through the carelessness of telegraphic clerks. When complaint was made to the Department, the answer on every occasion was a reference to the rules and regulations by which the Postmaster-General must be guided, and under which he must treat all alike, although he deeply regretted the losses incurred. There was one case in which a man sent a message for 1,400 rolls of knitting wool at 7½d., and the telegraphic clerk sent it at 8½d. That was an astounding blunder; hundreds of pounds were lost, and no compensation was given. He thought that in such cases there should be something more than a polite letter of regret from the Postmaster-General. As to porterage of telegrams, there was free delivery from the Post Office door up to three miles, but if the distance was a yard beyond that, a porterage of 3d. per mile was charged from the Post Office door, or in other words for four miles altogether. For instance, a man who lived just one yard beyond the three miles was charged a shilling for porterage. The fair thing would be to commence charging porterage beyond the three-mile limit. It was stated that the object of the Government was to keep the people on the land, and he held that it was their duty to put every person in the country, whether near or distant from a Post Office, on a footing of perfect equality in regard to telegraphic communication. It was wrong to punish people for living beyond the three-mile limit; and he thought that his right hon. friend should give free porterage everywhere. They had now a magnificent system of transmitting telegrams; and he thought the time had arrived when the limit for telegrams should be increased from twelve to twenty words for 6d. Further, the name of every place in the country should be charged as one word. A man should not be punished for living in a place called "Mud-in-the-Hole" by having its name charged as four words. He never could understand why "Charing Cross" was charged as two words, and "St. Pancras" as one, unless it was that the Post Office wished to square the saints. He would leave that question in the hands of his right hon. friend, with the hope that he would be able to give the Committee an assurance that in future every place in the country should be charged as one word.

In conclusion, he would like to say a few words with regard to the marvellous system which was known as wireless telegraphy, and which was invented by his distinguished friend Marconi. Although he was in no way connected with that system, he was delighted with its progress. Lately there were signs of greater keenness on the part of the Post Office regarding it; but he should like an explanation as to why Marconi had not been treated fairly by the Post Office authorities in this country. He was glad to say that his right hon. friend had to a great extent altered that state of things. He would tell the Committee what occurred. A few years ago Marconi submitted a written offer to the Postmaster-General to connect the islands of Guernsey and Sark by wireless telegraphy without any conditions or stipulations, and without any expense to the Post Office; but the Post Office officials refused it. He would ask his right hon. friend to state why that offer was refused, in view of the fact that the Government went to large expense the other day in constructing a cable from Guernsey to Sark rather than accept the noble offer. He would mention another case. When Marconi was trying very hard to extend his system, in place of getting generous assistance from the Post Office, he never got anything but opposition. Worse than that, a letter, which he believed emanated from the Post Office, was sent to all the Colonial Governments warning them against taking up Marconi's system. He should like a thorough inquiry into that matter. Only the other day Marconi asked that he should receive the same rights and privileges as were given to the cable companies. A more modest application he could not imagine; but Marconi did not get the facilities for which he asked. He did not think that was fair. Marconi did not receive from this country that generous assistance which he hoped for and expected; but, at the same time, he was bound to add that during the short time the Postmaster-General had been in office he had made the position of Marconi more comfortable.

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland) said he thought that some explanation should be given of the very large increases in Sub-heads A and B of this Vote. In view of the fact that the Post Office was working at a considerable loss, it appeared strange that there should be an increase of no less than £250,000 under those two heads. The maintenance of the postal telegraph system had increased by £133,000, or 16 per cent.; and telegraph works had increased by £125,000, or no less than 30 per cent. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be able to give an explanation of those large and sudden increases. Some of the increases were very surprising. For instance, linemen and batterymen in London numbered seventy-five last year, whereas this year they numbered 179. There were only three enginemen in London last year, as against eleven this year.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that was due to the progress of the London telephones.

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL said that the London telephones appeared under other heads. With reference to telephones, he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be able to tell the Committee what financial success had attended the operations of the Post Office in that direction, up to the present. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would also tell the Committee the result of his negotiations with the Marconi Company for wireless communication across the Atlantic. He sincerely hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would not adopt the suggestion of the hon. Member for Canterbury that the Government should take over and work the cable systems. A more risky speculation he could hardly imagine.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said he should like to ask the Postmaster-General to take this opportunity of stating to the House the names of the gentlemen he proposed to appoint to inquire into the grievances of the postal staff, also how long the inquiry would be likely to last; and whether the Report would be laid before Parliament.

Sir JOHN LENG said that the hon. Member for Canterbury had given the Committee a number of interesting suggestions which he hoped would be adopted as time went on. He should like to emphasise the suggestion of the hon. Gentleman as to the cheapening of foreign cable messages. As far as trade and commerce were concerned, it was most desirable that the rates for telegraphing across the Atlantic, to Australia, to India, to China, and other countries should be reduced to the lowest possible point. The imports and exports of the country depended very much on low charges for cable communications. By far the most valuable part of the business of the country was conducted almost entirely by cable; and it was greatly handicapped as compared with continental commerce by the high charges which had to be paid. Allusion had been made to the treatment which the Post Office meted out to the young inventor, Marconi.

And, it being half-past Seven of the Clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee also report Progress; to sit again this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

GREAT NORTHERN, PICCADILLY, AND BROMPTON RAILWAY (VARIOUS POWERS) BILL [BY ORDER].

As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

SUPPLY [11TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

1. £2,549,430, to complete the sum for Post Office Telegraphs.

*SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee) proceeding with his speech, referred to a widespread impression that existed that the Post Office had been somewhat ungenerous in its treatment of Mr. Marconi. So far as the public could gather the treatment of the Post Office had neither been encouraging nor helpful, which was quite contrary to the attitude of the Admiralty, who had promptly availed themselves to a large extent of Mr. Marconi's invention. His system had been employed on between 100 and 200 vessels in the Navy, and had been much appreciated. He would be glad to have information from the Postmaster-General as to anything that had been done in the way of facilitating the transmission of Marconi messages from the sea through the ordinary post offices on shore. He desired also to know what progress had been made in facilitating communication between the lightships on the coast and the shore lighthouses, so that in the event of shipwreck instant communication could be obtained with the coastguard and lifeboat services. He also asked what progress had been made with the laying of underground telegraph wires with a view to the avoidance of those serious interruptions of telegraphic communication with Scotland by the blowing down of wires in high winds, or their breakage by snowstorms. Perhaps, also, the Postmaster-General would give some information respecting the proceedings of the International Conference. He complimented the Postmaster-General, in conclusion, on his able discharge of the duties of his office, and disclaimed any desire to reflect upon his administration or do otherwise than assist him in Post Office reforms by the suggestions he made.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN thanked the hon. Member for the way in which he had spoken of him personally, and said he had to acknowledge that he had received nothing but kindness and consideration from both sides of the House in the discharge of his official duties. A number of questions had been put to him of varying interest, which were all worthy of a few words in reply, and as briefly as he could he would deal with those questions. He was not yet able to make any further announcement as to the Committee on rates of wages to Post Office employees. The Committee would see that it would take some time to form a Committee of that kind, composed of the persons they all desired to see serving upon it, but that was less unfortunate than otherwise would be the case, because the officials of the staff interested would require some time to collect and frame the information they would desire to place before its members. The hon. Member for Hoxton had asked when the Report would be issued. Such a question was altogether premature. The time likely to be occupied by the inquiry must depend on the method employed by the members of the staff in presenting their cases. He hoped they would select people competent to speak on their behalf and to put their case within reasonable limits and without unduly prolonging discussion, so that there would be a Report before any long period had elapsed. At the same time he thought it was more important that the work should be well done, and that the inquiry should result in securing a satisfactory judgment, than that matters should be hastened so as to obtain any Report at a very early stage. The discussion this evening had been chiefly concerned with the interests and grievances of the public. These were too often omitted from their debates on the postal and telegraph services, but they did deserve some attention. After all, the Post Office existed for the service of the public; and, whilst their desire was that employees of the State should be well treated and that its service should be a good service, the *raison d'être* of the Post Office was that it should be of service to the public.

The hon. Member for Canterbury called attention to the annual loss which was incurred upon the telegraph service as distinct from the postal service, and invited him to give to the Committee detailed reasons for the loss. The deficit was due to a variety of causes. He thought, in the first place, that the State paid an exorbitant sum when it originally bought the telegraphs. The Government of this country were more tender in regard to private interests than most other Governments were, and the result was that, when the State decided to take over the telegraphs, it had to pay a sum which not only forestalled future profits, but, he thought, exceeded any profits which could be fairly taken into account at that time. In the next place, in recent years there had been two streams of public opinion constantly washing against the Post Office and producing their effect upon its policy. One was the demand, admirably represented by his hon. friend the Member for Canterbury, for greater facilities for the public in every respect. The other was the demand, represented on both sides of the House, for higher pay to the servants of the State in whatever position they served. If, during a period of years, they had a steady increase in the cost of labour and a steady reduction in the price at which they supplied their finished product or gave their service to the public, he was afraid the result was bound to be what they said in regard to the telegraphs—a deficit instead of a profit. But the House of Commons was master in these matters. It had to decide, in the last resort, whether it was satisfied with the treatment of the employees; and it must decide also whether the public ought to get increased benefits as senders of telegrams or whether they were to get increased benefits as the owners of the telegraph system of the country. They could not have it both ways. They could not raise wages and increase the services rendered to the public and at the same time decrease the loss or turn the loss into a profit. The endeavour of his predecessors and himself had been to hold the balance fairly between these conflicting claims—to see that the State was not a discreditable employer of labour, to give to that section of the public which were their customers such facilities as they fairly could, and then to come to the House of Commons to support them when they refused, in the interests of the public at large, to confer extravagant benefits on particular individuals or classes.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I am sorry to interrupt my right hon. friend, but I do desire that he will tell the Committee the amount of money expended on the employees and the amount of concession given to the public. I can tell the Committee in a moment. It is £600,000 to the employees and about £20,000 to the public.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said his hon. friend had been good enough to save him the necessity of replying to the question.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL asked if the £600,000 was for telegraph employees alone.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN replied that the sum referred to was for postal *employés* generally. He thought that in some directions there were signs of improvement in their telegraph service. They were now embarking more and more largely on the telephone system, which he hoped would be a remunerative investment. He did not want the State to make an exaggerated profit out of the business it conducted; but, on the other hand, he held that if they gave up the idea of profit altogether they probably gave up also sound business management and the best incentive to economy and efficiency. He did not think they ought to supply to what was only a section of the public, after all, a great service at the cost of the public as a whole, or without making a reasonable return on the capital which the public as a whole had put into the business. If he was right in his expectations that their telephone service would prove to be remunerative, and he would do his best to make it so, the telephones being part of the monopoly of the Postmaster-General, that would come in to reduce the deficit on the telegraph service. It was true that already a reduction was made in the deficit by the telephone system, for they drew in royalties from the National Telephone Company something like £150,000 a year in aid of their revenue. He did not think that with the telegraph service in its present condition the Committee should expect that the Treasury, or even the Postmaster-General, should be willing to launch out in large fresh concessions involving greatly increased expenditure without commensurate return. His hon. friend had said they were collecting a revenue of something like £60,000 a year from those who registered telegraph addresses—a rather mean way of obtaining revenue, he thought—and that they ought to give it up and allow twenty words without addresses, or a less number of words including addresses. He had found many difficulties arising out of the present arrangement, but he thought that nearly every difficulty he had to confront arose out of some concession made to the public demand by one of his predecessors. And when those officials, to whom he was so greatly indebted, and to whom his hon. friend did scant justice when he spoke of their efforts to serve the public, came to him with criticisms or with objections to suggestions which he made, it was only to save him from the fate of having added to the difficulties of his successors, as he was sometimes inclined to reproach his predecessors past and gone for having landed him in these difficulties. There was the £60,000 with which his hon. friend taunted him. He should be glad to drop that sum tomorrow if he could give up the registered addresses with it, and he should consider it the best stroke of business that any Postmaster-General had done for a long time. But he could not give up the registered addresses. It had got too firm a hold on the public. Even if he could do away with it for domestic purposes, he could not do it for foreign and colonial messages. But if his hon. friend thought that the £60,000 paid the Post Office for the trouble, the inconvenience, and the interruption of working which were caused by the system of registered addresses he made a great mistake. He should be very glad to get rid of registered addresses if he could.

There had been recently introduced by the engineers of the telegraph service of the Post Office a switch-board something like the switch-board which was in operation in the telephone system throughout the country. The system hitherto had been that practically every branch office in London wishing to communicate with another district office had to telegraph into the Central Telegraph Office in London, the message had to be read off, written out, carried to another operator in the same building, and again telegraphed. That system was cumbersome, slow, and gave an added risk of mistakes; but there had not been business enough to enable them to run a wire between the offices. They had now, however, got this arrangement of a switchboard by which, say, Kensington, could be switched straight through to Chelsea, thus saving the operation at the Central Telegraph Office. There had been difficulties in the way, but the engineers had successfully overcome them, and the system was working very satisfactorily in a great number of offices with a great saving of time in the delivery of messages and a certain saving of labour. As to the registration of addresses, he had looked very carefully into the matter. It must be borne in mind that there were thousands of them in London alone; a register had to be compiled and kept up to date in every office, and there were alterations to be made and circulated daily. If he could have seen his way to giving a free address with a slightly reduced number of words to the message, he would have done so gladly; but there were obstacles in the way, and he was quite sure he should have the whole commercial community against him in regard to such a change.

He hoped he might be able to announce before very long some further reduction in certain of the rates to foreign countries. But it was not quite so simple a matter as his hon. friend the Member for Canterbury in his enthusiasm seemed to think; it was a matter of negotiation with foreign countries and cable companies. Very complex interests had sometimes to be dealt with. There were many things which he was prepared to do and to which he believed he could secure the assent of the Treasury without much difficulty; but the assent of foreign countries was also necessary. They must also bear in mind that the strategic and other interests of this country in the great cable system of the world must be considered. We were the pioneers of that system, and in that regard English enterprise, industry, and capital had no doubt done magnificent work. He should lose no opportunity that offered of securing a reduction. In passing he must say that his hon. friend was over-sanguine as to the results of reductions; cable traffic did not respond rapidly to reductions in rates. The Australian traffic had made no great progress since the great reductions that had taken place, and the South African traffic was perhaps the one instance to the contrary. They must also remember that while 3s. 6d. or 10s. 6d. per word seemed a monstrous rate to pay, yet that word, thanks to the use of codes and ciphers, generally conveyed a whole sentence, or as much as an ordinary Parliamentary report gave of five minutes' talk — and, if they considered it as a rate for information conveyed, the charges were by no means so monstrous as they appeared to be at first sight. Lord Balfour's Committee came to the conclusion that, speaking generally, the rates were not exorbitant. There were some exceptions, and to these he had been giving his attention. He could not at present give the Committee any further information; but he hoped, in connection with the International Telegraph Conference, that they might arrive at some further reductions. More than that he could not say.

As to the other questions raised by his hon. friend, he did not propose at the present time to adopt the policy of purchase in regard to the Spanish cable. They were in communication with the company as to the terms on which the rates might be renewed, and would do their best to serve the public. As to the rates between mermany and Spain, it must be re-Gembered that the German Government subsidised their cable. With regard to wireless telegraphy, his hon. friend seemed to have rather inconsistent ideas. If he were quite as certain of the possibilities of the future of wireless telegraphy as his hon. friend was, this would not be the moment at which he should press upon his friends the claims of investments in cable shares. He did not think those who owned cable shares had any occasion to become frightened about their investments; but he did not know that it was a moment for launching out in great cable speculation. Before doing so he thought they might well watch the progress of Mr. Marconi's system. He was bound to say that scant justice had been done to the Post Office in this matter by various speakers. Long before the inventions of Mr. Marconi had reached their present point he received such facilities as the Post Office could give for his experiments. The Post Office did everything they could to assist what they thought might be a great progress in civilisation, and they had neither shown any disposition to strangle the invention at its birth nor to prevent its development and success.

*SIR JOHN LENG: Then why the long delay with the communication at Poldhu?

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he would deal with that point later on: he was now on the general question. The Post Office had had no desire to strangle the invention or prevent its full development, but they had, however, desired not to bind themselves to give away the rights of the Postmaster-General in the same way in which they were given away in regard to telephones, before the importance of telephones was seen. For that action his predecessors and himself had never ceased to be criticised, and the Post Office had still to bear the burden. At present they knew very little about wireless telegraphy. We knew very little of the conditions under which wireless telegraphy would have to be worked. In most countries the Post Office was in the position of a monopolist; but in this country the monopoly of the Postmaster-General did not cover communications with a foreign shore or outside the three-mile limit. The Post Office, therefore, could not strangle the invention even if it wanted to. Their business communications had not been with Mr. Marconi, though personally his relations with that gentleman had been most friendly. They had been dealing with the company which possessed the inventor's rights. The company did not ask merely for what the cable companies had. They asked for an exclusive right to work wireless telegraphy in this country, and they asked for permanence. He could not give them either. He said he would give them a private wire at Poldhu; and when they applied for it they had that private wire, and they had had it for some time past. There was no difficulty at any time about the company's having their private wire on ordinary terms, or obtaining delivery of any messages sent to them from any point in this country, or having messages received at Poldhu put on the Post Office wires. But they asked the Post Office to become their agents for the collection of messages to be transmitted by their wireless system in the same way that anybody could hand in a message at any post office to be transmitted by the cable companies. He wrote explaining generally the terms on which he was prepared to act, and laid down certain conditions he would have to enforce in order to prevent interference with the Admiralty for strategic reasons and to safeguard national interests. He further said they must satisfy his technical officers of what was disputed by him—namely, that the company were in a position to carry on their business and transmit messages from one side of the Atlantic to the other. That letter was written on March 31st last, and he was still waiting for a reply. He did not complain of the delay in the least; but he did complain that the delay should be attributed to the Post Office. When they were in a position to write him to send down his technical officers, and when he was satisfied that the company were in a position to carry on the business, he would be prepared to meet them, but he was not prepared to collect money from the public until he was satisfied that the company could do its share of the work. The Committee would see that the conditions he had laid down were such as were necessary to safeguard the national interests, as well as the strategic interests, of this country. There was nothing to prevent the Board of Trade using the Marconi apparatus: indeed, he believed his right hon. friend the head of the Department was in communication with the company on the subject.

As regarded the progress of underground wires to the North, in a statement he made to the Scotch Chambers of Commerce early in the year he explained what progress had been made in the past year and the programme for this year, which he believed would be fulfilled before the end of the year. He thought the Post Office deserved great credit for the constant progress that had been made in the scientific development of these underground cables. The sum provided for this purpose during the last two years was £30,000 a year, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had provided this year £130,000, and the fact that they were making rapid progress with this work in part accounted for the increased expenditure to which attention had been drawn. Another part of the increase was due to the extension of the telephone system in London. Information had been asked for with regard to the progress of the London telephone system. Considerable difficulties had had to be overcome in connection with local authorities, and so forth, but he had had a good many interviews with local authorities, and was glad to say that the relations of the Post Office with those bodies were now on a much better footing than they had been hitherto, and he hoped that in the future there would be less friction than in the past. They had laid about 1,000 miles of pipes under the streets of London to carry the cables, and into those pipes they had already drawn over 100,000 miles of wires. The net result was that during the last six months there had been a most rapid increase in the number of telephone subscribers and in the number of calls. Of course he had had complaints, but the friction had mostly been between the Post Office exchanges and the Telephone Company, and not in consequence of bad working on the part of the Post Office system itself. He regretted that the Post Office monopoly in this matter had ever been made the subject of licences to any private company at all. This was not a suitable matter for competition. It was one of those cases in which the public could only lose by competition and could only gain by a monopoly, and if there was a monopoly it ought to be in the hands of a public authority. In a great part of the country the licence of the Telephone Company came to an end in 1911; and he could not conceive that after that period any Postmaster-General would ever allow the system to pass out of his hands again. The Post Office were steadily extending their system in various directions. The Central London Exchange was, he thought, already the biggest exchange in the world, and they were looking forward to an enormous development in a few years.

One other matter had been mentioned, viz., the International Telegraph Conference. That Conference was mainly concerned with the details of telegraph administration. These details had their interest for the public, as on them depended the smooth working and efficiency of the international telegraph system, but at the same time they were matters of detail and not suited for discussion in this House. With regard to the question of the reduction of charge, they might obtain some advantage, but he could not say more at present. Then there was the question of the compulsory adoption of the Berne vocabulary for all codes. He had instructed the British delegates to oppose the compulsory adoption of that vocabulary. He could not say what the decision of the Conference would be; but he felt strongly that the disadvantages to the commercial community which would result from its adoption would far outweigh any possible advantages which it might have from an administrative point of view, and he hoped the Conference would come to the same view.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL pointed out that under the main heads of the Vote the money asked for was required for both telegraphic and telephonic purposes, so that it was impossible to tell the actual cost of either service. He hoped that next year the right hon. Gentleman would endeavour to frame the Estimate in such a way as to separate the telegraph from the telephone charges.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he would be very glad if he could do as the hon. Member suggested, but in point of law telephones were telegraphs, and it was by virtue of that fact the Postmaster-General enjoyed his present monopoly. Consequently the telephone service had always been treated as part of the telegraph system, and it would be impossible now to unravel the accounts which had been kept conjointly for so many years past. As far as the London system was concerned, however, he proposed to keep the charges separate, so as to be able to judge whether the charges made were fair, and whether they resulted in a profit or a loss.

MR. FREDRICK WILSON (Norfolk, Mid) urged that more liberality should be shown in encouraging the establishment of telegraphic offices in villages. He believed that if that were done the necessary guarantees would gladly be given.

MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burghs) said he hoped that the Government would do nothing to identify themselves with the Marconi system of telegraphy as against other systems which had been more successful but not so well advertised. He submitted that the time had not arrived when the Government should identify themselves with any particular system; and he hoped that the House would be given an opportunity of considering the question before any large expenditure was incurred.

MR. MARKHAM thought the statement of the Postmaster-General was an extraordinary one. Did the Department really not know what profit was made on the telegraph system, and what on the telephone system? There ought to be a profit and loss account of each service, otherwise the concern was not being carried on on sound business principles.

MR. JOHN CAMPBELL (Armagh, S.) suggested that the sender of a telegram should be allowed to insert in the form the time at which he handed in the message according to the post-office clock. He had had personal experience of the delay caused in the offices, a telegram which he had sent having been post-timed twenty minutes by the clerk. He desired to refer also to the giving of a contract to a firm in which a Member of the House had a direct pecuniary interest. By a statute of George III. Members were forbidden to have any such interest in Government contracts. This particular contract was for a number of telephone cabinets, most of which had had to be returned for alterations. He asked the right hon. Gentleman to state what were the prices quoted by private contractors as against those of Messrs. Maple and Co. As to the telephone charges, he believed the charge for a three-minutes conversation with Dublin was 5s. or 6s. This he thought was exorbitant, and ought to be reduced.

MR. DALZIEL referred to the establishment of telephone call-offices in public-houses. Such an arrangement was exceedingly awkward, as persons desiring to use the telephone had to push their way through perhaps a dozen people in the bar before they could get to the instrument. The public interest would be better served by other places, equally convenient, being secured for the purpose.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he entirely agreed with the hon. Member, and he would never establish a telephone call-office in a public-house if other suitable premises could be secured. But anybody in the London area could have a telephone at the message rate, and allow it to be used by the public.

MR. DALZIEL asked whether they could charge on the penny-in-the-slot system.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said they could, and many tradesmen, especially in the suburbs, found it a great convenience and benefit to have a telephone and allow their customers to use it. He could not make a special law to prevent publicans doing the same as other people, but he could assure the hon. Member that no action had been taken by the Post Office to make publicans their agents in this matter. The points mentioned by the hon. Member for South Armagh had already been brought before his notice by Questions across the floor of the House, and he had already told the hon. Member that the cabinets had previously been made not by private firms, but in the Post Office factory, and that it would not be to the public interest to state the prices quoted by the different firms. The Act to which the hon. Member had referred had no bearing whatever on the case. As to the remarks of the hon. Member for the Mansfield Division, as he had already stated, it would be impossible to analyse past expenditure, and say how much had been spent on the separate services, although he quite agreed that the more they could find out how much each service cost the better it would be.

Vote agreed to.

CLASS IV.

2. £88,619, to complete the sum for British Museum.

MR. SOARES drew attention to the newspapers stored at Hendon, and said that speedy reference to the speeches of politicians was of considerable importance in these days. Before one could look up a speech of the Colonial Secretary, for example, and go to Hendon and back, its interest might be out of date. He asked for information as to the spaces acquired by the authorities, the number of officers lodged on the premises of the British Museum, and as to the purchase of plots of land for the purpose of extending the Museum. Were they establishing a system of residential flats for officials at the British Museum? That was a very important question, having regard to the risk of fire.

MR. MARKHAM said he was glad to notice that at last the catalogues at the British Museum had been attended to He complained, however, that the Government did not provide sufficient money to bind the books and papers at the Museum. The answer given to this complaint was that the money was given to the authorities to spend, and they dealt with the expenditure as they thought fit; but he had heard from the officials that the amount of money they received from the Government was not sufficient to enable them to have all the books and papers properly bound. As this was a great national institution, he appealed to the Secretary to the Treasury to see that a sufficient sum of money was granted to enable the authorities not only to catalogue the exhibits properly, but also to have the various books and papers properly bound, so as to preserve them. Many valuable books and papers had been lying there two and three years unbound, and they were rapidly deteriorating.

MR. ELLIOT said that it was a very reasonable and economical course to acquire land for the purpose of storing newspapers at Hendon. He thought that there was no danger about looking up the speeches of statesmen, and there were not many who had recourse to the British Museum for the purpose. He understood that progress was being made with the buildings at Hendon, and he indicated that the policy of late had been not to have many persons living on the Museum premises. The hon. Member for Mansfield said that there was not enough money voted to enable the trustees of the British Museum to carry on the work of binding in an efficient manner, and that in consequence valuable papers were deteriorating. All he could say was that the allocation of the money voted was the business of those who managed the British Museum. He had received no such complaint as that to which the hon. Member had referred, but if it were brought to his attention he would do all he could to see that the papers of which the British Museum trustees were the guardians were properly bound, and looked after, and preserved.

MR. SOARES asked if all the twelve officials lived on the premises, and was this number greater than last year? All the hon. Gentleman had said was that there was a tendency to reduce the number.

MR. ELLIOT in reply was understood to say that the chief officers still lived on the premises and he did not think it was desirable that the whole of them should be removed from the British Museum. They could not be expected to sweep everybody out of the precincts of the Museum and make a clean sweep of the officials, for that would not be a wise thing to do. They were, however, moving in the direction of reducing the number of officials who lived on the premises.

MR. WHITLEY asked for an explanation of the great increase in the salaries upon this Vote. This great increase could not be due to merely normal annual increases, and he thought they required some explanation.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.) I asked if the officials referred to actually lived upon the premises of the British Museum, were the buildings which they inhabited connected by bricks and mortar with the same building in which the priceless treasures of the British Museum were contained? If so there must be a very great danger from fire which could be averted by providing residences within the precincts but not actually in contact and connected with the British Museum itself. He believed that some shops had been purchased on one side of the National Gallery in order to isolate that building from all danger of fire from domestic dwellings. If it was possible to spend money in this way for the protection of the pictures in the National Gallery surely the same thing could be done in regard to the British Museum.

Mr. ELLIOT was understood to reply that it was necessary for some of the officials to reside in the Museum building, and that some of the officials had residences which were not actually connected with the Museum building.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE asked if the Secretary to the Treasury would make some inquiry on this point in order to remove these defects in case they existed.

Mr. ELLIOT said he would do so. He did not at all complain that the matter had been raised, and he would always be grateful for any suggestions for the proper protection of the valuable collections at the Museum. With regard to the salaries he would remind the hon. Member for Halifax that the British Museum was every year increasing in value and importance, and, therefore, it was necessary that there should be a corresponding increase in the salaries and allowances.

Vote agreed to.

3. £7,027, to complete the sum for National Gallery.

Mr HERBERT SAMUEL asked what progress had been made in checking the danger of fire at the National Gallery.

Mr. ELLIOT said he believed some progress had been made in removing buildings and in freeing the Gallery from the risk which undoubtedly might have been caused by the near presence of private property.

Mr. JOHN CAMPBELL asked who was responsible for the pictures purchased with the nation's money.

Mr. ELLIOT said that new pictures were purchased upon the authority of the directors of the National Gallery.

Vote agreed to.

4. £2,445, to complete the sum for National Portrait Gallery.

5. £3,281, to complete the sum for Wallace Collection.

Mr. WHITLEY drew attention to a very heavy charge for framing, in Item C, on page 385. He wished to know whether this amount was likely to continue to appear on the Estimates. They were asked to vote the sum of £1,900. That was a type of expenditure which ought not to be a permanently recurring one. He asked whether the hon. Gentleman could assure the Committee that this £1,900 would be the last of such large items, and whether the amount now to be voted would put the Collection in a satisfactory condition.

Mr. ELLIOT said the present amount was very much reduced from that of last year, but still it was far beyond what might be expected to be the normal charge. He believed there was to be some change in the management. He hoped and believed there would be a considerable reduction in the expenditure this year.

Mr. CHARLES ALLEN said there was room for considerable economy in regard to the Wallace Collection, looking to the cost of that Gallery compared with others.

Mr. WHITLEY asked whether the Board of Works was going to take over the Wallace Collection.

Mr. ELLIOT said he understood that was so.

Mr. WHITLEY said the Board of Works was hardly a suitable body to take over the Collection. If there was anything of that sort in the wind the hon. Gentleman should tell the Committee now. He asked whether there was any idea of interfering with the existing trustees.

MR. ELLIOT said he understood that it had been suggested that the Board of Works should undertake the management of the internal arrangements.

Vote agreed to.

6. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £23,780, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for sundry Grants in aid of Scientific Investigation, etc., and other Grants."

*MR. BRIGG (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley) said that the term scientific investigation as applied to the grants which were made in this instance was an entire misnomer, inasmuch as a large portion of it was used for purposes which could not, by any stretch of imagination, be called scientific investigation. The amount expended by this nation as compared with other nations on really valuable scientific research was very small indeed. Of the £5,000 placed at the disposal of the Royal Society, from which grants were made for scientific research, only about £715 was devoted to the advancement of industry. That sum was expended in small grants of £7, £10, or £20 to men who might have valuable ideas, but before they received these sums they were obliged to submit the matters to the Committee of the Royal Society. He instanced what was being done by Germany in regard to aniline dyes, which were originally invented in this country, as showing that in the expenditure we made for scientific research we were behind other countries. Considering the valuable industries we had we ought to make larger grants for this purpose.

*CAPTAIN C. B. BALFOUR (Middlesex, Hornsey) asked whether the maintenance of the Ben Nevis Observatory was provided for in the Vote. He understood it was the only high level observatory in Great Britain and Ireland. In France, on the other hand, there were several high level stations, which were considered to be of great value. There was a question last year of the abolition of the Ben Nevis Observatory altogether. He hoped this was not contemplated.

MR. DALZIEL expressed surprise that the Vote did not include the amount which he understood the Government contemplated authorising in connection with the Antarctic Expedition. He urged the Government, before absolutely committing themselves to the amount, to satisfy themselves that the expenditure which had already been incurred had been wisely incurred. Certain facts had been put before him tending to show that there had been an enormous amount of absolute extravagance.

MR. ELLIOT said it would be perfectly right to inquire into expenditure after it was incurred, but he could not see how that could take place before it was incurred to get men out of the difficulty—into which they had gone by our assistance. The question of maintaining Ben Nevis Observatory was under consideration. The investigations for which it was established being complete, it was a question whether there was anything to be gained from the maintenance. It might be that not much more would be gained by maintaining the observatory on Ben Nevis than would be gained by having an observatory more conveniently situated.

MR. DALZIEL said the Secretary to the Treasury had made a general answer in regard to the assistance to be given to the Antarctic Expedition, but this question was much too important to be brushed aside by an answer like that. In the absence of any promise to make inquiry into the expenditure extravagantly incurred he moved the reduction of the Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £23,680, be granted for the said service."— (*Mr. Dalziel.*)

MR. MARKHAM thought the Secretary to the Treasury must have forgotten the letter of the Prime Minister on the subject, which was on the same line as the remarks of his hon. friend the Member for the Kirkcaldy Burghs.

MR. ELLIOT said, from the fact that the Prime Minister regretted the expense incurred it did not follow that we should refuse the necessary expense for rescuing the expedition in distress. It was no question of extravagance by the Government; it was not a Government expedition, but an expedition to the cost of which the Government contributed with others.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL said the Motion for reduction was a protest against the refusal to make inquiry into the accusations of extravagance.

MR. ELLIOT said there had been nothing more than a general statement; there had been no specific charge. If the hon. Member for the Kirkcaldy Burghs would make a specific charge, and lay it before him, then possibly he might be induced to change his mind. At present he could not agree to the suggestion of the hon. Member.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE said the insinuation which had been made with regard to the cost of the expedition having been grossly underestimated was made by the Prime Minister. Surely that ought not to be brushed aside by a general remark by the hon. Member. His hon. friend asked that before a further sum was granted for this purpose the accounts of the expedition should be closely looked into. While they all recognised that these unfortunate people should be rescued from the predicament in which they were now placed, there should be some guarantee given on the part of the Admiralty or the Treasury that funds should not be devoted to any purposes other than were absolutely necessary to rescue these navigators. He understood that a sum of money had been given to the Government for this very purpose, and that a further sum was proposed to be added.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is not on the Vote we are now discusing.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE said he noticed under item L, 6, that there was a heading "National Antarctic Expedition." He imagined there was only one "National Antarctic Expedition."

MR. ELLIOT: That is last year's subscription to the expedition.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE said that if they were not allowed to press this matter now, might they get an assurance that a similar item would not appear on the Supplementary Votes until a more satisfactory explanation had been given to the questions put on this point. He asked the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he could give any explanation as to the actual position of these unfortunate navigators, and for what purpose this money was to be spent?

MR. DALZIEL said that on a general Vote of this kind they were surely entitled to ask a question as to what was the general policy of the Government. Of course they were not going to stop to inquire into expenditure when life was at stake; but the suggestion that because public contributions had been given this was not a Government matter, was a most extraordinary position for the hon. Gentleman to take up. This was public money, and all he asked was that the hon. Gentleman would undertake that he would personally inquire into the charges of extravagance which had been made by the Prime Minister himself, and into the accounts, and the manner in which the estimates of the cost of the Expedition had been prepared. That was what they had a Secretary to the Treasury for. They were not asking too much. They did not ask him to give a declaration that would bind the whole of the Cabinet; that was impossible for the hon. Gentleman to do, even with all his intellectual attainments. It was in the interests of the public, and of his own Department, that the hon. Gentleman should undertake to make this personal investigation.

MR. ELLIOT said it was quite clear now that the hon. Member did not think that the rescue should be made in any way conditional on this proposed investigation. He was very glad to hear that. He had not heard the Prime Minister's statement the other day, but he did not understand that the Prime Minister had made any charges of maladministration in respect of moneys already subscribed. The hon. Gentleman suggested that it was the business of the Department to make investigation without any particulars being given. If the hon. Member had a grievance and would lay before him facts and particulars which made it appear probable that there had been maladministration of funds, then certainly he should look into the matter, and, if necessary, press for a proper inquiry. Beyond that he could not go.

Question put.

Committee divided:—Ayes, 36; Noes, 119. (Division List No. 115.)

AYES.

Allen, Chas. P. (*Glos., Stroud*)
Bayley, Thomas (*Derbyshire*)
Bolton, Thomas Dolling
Brigg, John
Caldwell, James
Channing, Francis Allston
Cremer, William Randal
Crooks, William
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Ellis, John Edward
Fenwick, Charles
Fuller, J. M. F.
Harmsworth, R. Leicester
Hayne, Rt.Hon.Charles Seale-
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hutchinson,Dr.CharlesFredk.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (*Cornwall*)
Lough, Thomas
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
M'Crae, George
Rickett, J. Compton
Rothschild,Hon.LionelWalter
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles E. (*Stafford*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Soares, Ernest J.
Strachey, Sir Edward
Taylor, Theo. C. (*Radcliffe*)
Thomson, F. W. (*York, W.R.*)
Toulmin, George
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Wilson, H. J. (*York, W. R.*)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Dalziel and Mr. Markham.

NOES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balfour,Rt.Hon.A.J.(*Manch'r*
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*)
Banbury,Sir Frederick George
Beckett, Ernest William
Bignold, Arthur
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Bull, William James
Butcher, John George
Cavendish,V.C.W.(*Derbyshire*
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chamberlain,RtHn.JA(*Worc.*
Chapman, Edward
Charrington, Spencer
Churchill, Winston Spencer
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Craig,CharlesCurtis(*Antrim,S*
Cranborne, Viscount
Crossley, Sir Savile
Dalkeith, Earl of
Denny, Colonel
Digby, John K. D. Wingfield-
Doogan, P. C.
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Duke, Henry Edward
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Fellowes,Hon.Ailwyn Edward
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Galloway, William Johnson
Garfit, William
Godson,SirAugustus Frederick
Gordon,Hn.J.E (*Elgin&Nairn*
Gore,HnG.R.C.Ormsby-(*Salop*
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir John Eldon
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Hamilton,RtHnLordG.(*Mid'x*
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Hatch, Ernest Frederick G.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heath, Arthur H. (*Hanley*)
Heath, James (*Staffs., N.W.*)
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Hoult, Joseph
Hutton, John (*Yorks. N.R.*)
Jessel,CaptainHerbert Merton
Joicey, Sir James
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir J. H.
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*)
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (*Monm'th*)
Lawson,Jn.Grant(*Yorks.NR.*)
Lees, Sir Elliott (*Birkenhead*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long,Rt.Hn.Walter(*Bristol,S*
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Macdona, John Cumming
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Malcolm, Ian
Morgan, D. J. (*Walthamstow*)
Morrison, James Archibald
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mowbray, Sir Robt. Gray C.
Murray,RtHnA.Graham(*Bute*
Myers, William Henry
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Percy, Earl
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Pretyman, Ernest George
Purvis, Robert
Randles, John S.
Rankin, Sir James
Reid, James (*Greenock*)
Ritchie,Rt.Hn.Chas.Thomson

Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Rutherford, W. W. (*Liverpool*)
Samuel, Herbert L. (*Cleveland*)
Seely, Charles Hilton (*Lincoln*
Seely, Maj. J. E. B. (*Isle of Wight*
Smith, Abel H. (*Hertford, E.*)
Smith, H. C (*North'mb. Tyneside*
Smith, James Parker (*Lanarks.*
Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (*Strand*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. *Oxf'd Univ.*
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw. M.
Vincent, Col Sir C. E. H (*Sheffield*
Vincent, Sir Edgar (*Exeter*)
Walrond, Rt. Hn Sir William H.
Warde, Colonel C. E.
Webb, Col. William George
Wilson John (*Glasgow*)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (*Bath*
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

Tellers for the Noes—
Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

7. £77,100, to complete the sum for Universities and Colleges, Great Britain, and Intermediate Education, Wales.

Resolutions to be reported.

Class VII.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £27,000, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Salaries and other Expenses of Temporary Commissions, Committees, and Special Inquiries:"—

Mr. CALDWELL said he wished to draw attention to the item of £431 for the Colonisation Board. This was a Board which was first appointed about seventeen years ago, when a grant of £17,000 was made to send out certain crofters from the Highlands of Scotland to places called Saltcoats and Killarney, in Canada. This Board was appointed to look after these crofters, and the cost of it had been £6,000, although the advances made to them for the purpose of obtaining implements, stock, and starting them in business only amounted to £10,000. In a footnote to the Estimate it was stated that annual Reports were rendered to Parliament by the Board. He asked the Secretary to the Treasury when any such Report was rendered, for he had not been able to discover one, or what the Board had been doing, except expending every year £430. The matter was brought before the Committee in Supply in 1897, when Mr. Hanbury, who was then Secretary to the Treasury, promised that the proceedings of the Board would be brought to an end. The whole scheme of the Settlements at Saltcoats and Killarney had fallen through; it was a perfect failure; and the whole of the money had been practically lost, and yet they were spending £430 a year in continuing to look after the lost money! One gentleman was paid £100 a year as Secretary to the Board, and another gentleman in Canada received £250 a year, and £75 a year for travelling expenses, in looking after what and whom? In 1891, Dr. Clarke went out to Canada to see for himself what was being done, and he stated that so far as the Saltcoats Settlement was concerned every one of the crofters had sold up, and gone elsewhere. They were hopelessly bankrupt in 1891; and yet ever since then the Government had been paying hundreds of pounds every year. He wanted to know what the men who received that money did. According to a note in the Estimate they had to render annual Reports to Parliament. Where were those annual Reports? He had searched for them, but could not find any Report later than 1897. How much money had they recovered? Of course the Secretary to the Treasury would get up in this case also and express his sympathy. But they wanted facts. They wanted to know what the Commission was doing, and if they had recovered a penny of money. What was the use of saying that annual Reports were to be presented to Parliament when they were not presented. It was bad enough that the money which had been advanced should be lost; but why should they go on year after year paying more money in the vain attempt to recover it?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire) said that perhaps the hon. Gentleman would allow him to reply, as he was more familiar with the matter than his hon. friend the Secretary to the Treasury. The question was an old one; though it was perhaps not familiar to some hon. Members. The colonisation scheme in Canada was on the whole, no doubt, not successful. He was glad that the hon. Member had reminded the Committee of Dr. Clarke, because if anything was calculated to conduce to the failure of the experiment, it was the visit of Dr. Clarke and the speeches he made. He need not say anything more about that, as they all knew what Dr. Clarke's speeches were like. The hon. Gentleman would remember that a Commission was sent out to Canada under Professor Rankine to report on the state of affairs there. That Commission reported, and he was sure the hon. Gentleman read the Report. If not, he was charmed to find one Blue-book with which the hon. Gentleman was not familiar. He was speaking from memory, but he thought the Report was presented to Parliament about three or four years ago, and he was sure that the hon. Gentleman's reading was not so far behind as that. The experiment was actually closed, in the technical sense of the word, as far as the Government was concerned; but certain people were left in the position of tenants. He quite agreed with the hon. Gentleman that there was no use in throwing good money after bad; but, at the same time, it would be utterly foolish not to collect the rents. The expenses in Canada were strictly limited, and were devoted to what he might call winding up the concern. The Government hoped that in two or three years the experiment would cease altogether.

MR. CALDWELL said the Lord Advocate had given precisely the answer which he had expected from the Secretary to the Treasury. What he wanted to know was why Reports had not been presented to Parliament, although it was stated in the Estimates that an Annual Report was presented. He also wished to know what was the value of the property, and what amount of rent was collected? Were they paying £420 a year to collect £50? It was no use saying that the affair would be wound up in two or three years. In 1897, the late Mr. Hanbury said it ought to be wound up at once. Surely, if the Lord Advocate remembered the contents of the Report so well, he would be able to tell the Committee what was the value of the property. He did not find fault with the Lord Advocate, as the matter was sprung on him, and he could not be expected to know all the details. But they did expect that the Secretary to the Treasury, when he asked money for a

Commission, should be able to tell the Committee what that Commission was doing, and what value they were getting for the expenditure. They had received no information whatever on the subject, and he would move the reduction of the Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £26,900, be granted for the said service."—(*Mr. Caldwell.*)

MR. DALZIEL said he thought the Committee was much indebted to his hon. friend for directing attention to a matter which, in his judgment, required the consideration of the Government. A note in the Estimates stated that Annual Reports were presented to Parliament; but Parliament had not received Annual Reports; and the Government were unable to give the Committee any information with reference to the present state of affairs. It was perhaps a small point, but it served to show how the Government regarded more important matters. He did not suppose that any Government ever had so many special inquiries on hand as the present Government, which ought to be known as the Government of temporary Commissions and permanent omissions. Whenever they got into trouble they forthwith appointed a Commission, which went on inquiring year after year. He wished to put a few questions to the Secretary to the Treasury. At what stage was the Historical Manuscripts Commission at the present time? What particular work had it been doing during the last year or two? The Sewage Disposal Commission was at work for a large number of years; could the hon. Gentleman tell the Committee when there was a prospect of that inquiry coming to an end? The public did not seem to take any very great interest in it. Then as to the Commission on the South African War. While the war was in progress they were assured that it was unpatriotic to ask any questions about the huge and admitted blunders which had been committed. They were told that when the war was over there would be a full and complete inquiry; and that responsibility for blunders would be placed on the proper shoulders. They had some difficulty in getting the inquiry appointed at all; and when they got it they found it was only to deal with certain portions of the war; and that the Commission was debarred from inquiring into many matters in which the country was interested. Therefore, the Commission could not be regarded as of a satisfactory character. Another complaint in regard to it was that it was in a position to practically cook the reports of the evidence. It might be that where the honour and capacity of some of the leading British generals were concerned, that all the evidence should not be published; but it was quite a different matter to keep back evidence with reference to salient points of the investigation. The inquiry had been conducted with closed doors. The representatives of newspapers had not been admitted, but had been supplied with reports cooked to suit the chairman and certain members of the Commission. Even when the Report was presented to Parliament, this House would not be in a position to judge of its value, as it would not have the evidence before it. Could the hon.

Gentleman tell the Committee the exact stage which this inquiry had reached? Had it completed its evidence; and how soon might they reasonably expect its report?

*MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY said he had now in his hand the Report for last year of the Commission to which the hon. Member for Mid Lanark had referred.

MR. BRIGG said he thought that one item on page 504, namely, repayments to the Local Loans Fund, was misleading. The amount was £19,359; but a small note stated that that sum had been written off. The meaning of it was that bad debts had been contracted by the Government, and had now been wiped off as of no value. He should like to know how many more bad debts the Government had.

MR. SOARES said he wished to ask the hon. Gentleman if he could inform the Committee as to the present position of the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis. Many thousands of people were waiting to know whether tuberculosis could be conveyed to human beings through milk. The Commission had been sitting for nearly two years; and he hoped the hon. Gentleman would be able to say that he expected its Report very shortly.

MR. ELLIOT said he thought that the remarks of the hon. Member for the Keighley Division should rather be addressed to the Local Loans Fund Board. With reference to the South African Commission he knew, as a matter of fact, that the evidence had been completed, and that the Commission was now considering its Report. As to when that Report would be presented, the Commission was entirely master of its own time and proceedings. With reference to the Tuberculosis Commission, he was not in a position to give any information as to when its Report would be presented. It was not a matter within his control.

MR. CALDWELL said that apart from the question whether hon. Members found Reports in the library or not, they expected that when the Government asked for money, that they should explain to the Committee what it was wanted for. He did not consider it was the duty of every hon. Member to ferret out such information for himself. He had now seen the Report mentioned by the Lord Advocate. It stated that of eleven settlers nine had discharged their debts in full, and that the other two estates were in progress of changing hands. Were they to continue to pay £431 a year while those two estates were changing hands? He was very much indebted to the Lord Advocate for obtaining the Report. They were now to spend £431 a year for the purpose of recovering ——

And, it being Midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Resolutions to be reported upon Wednesday; Committee also report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday.

Adjourned at seven minutes after Twelve o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 9*th June*, 1903.

The House met at Two of the clock.

IMPRISONMENT OF A MEMBER (MR. M'HUGH).

*MR. SPEAKER informed the House that he had received the following letter relative to the imprisonment of a Member:—

> "From the High Sheriff, County Sligo.
> "Sligo, 8th June, 1903.
> "To The Right Honourable
> "The Speaker, House of Commons.
> "Sir,
>
> "I beg to inform you that on the 6th, June, 1903, I arrested Patrick Aloysius M'Hugh, Esq., M.P. for the North Division of Leitrim and delivered him into the custody of the Governor of Sligo Gaol, acting on an order of the Right Honourable Mr. Justice Ross, Land Judge of the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice in Ireland, dated 18th day of April, 1902.
>
> "I enclose copy of the order and warrant respectively.
>
> "I have the honour to remain, Sir,
> "Your obedient servant,
> "A. C. O'HARA,
> "High Sheriff of Sligo."

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): I suppose I shall be within my right, according to precedents, in moving for a Committee to inquire into this matter, as a question of privilege, provided the Leader of the House does not make the Motion.

*MR. SPEAKER: That is not so. There is no question of privilege where the contempt is one of a criminal nature. In the order enclosed, it is not stated whether the contempt was of a criminal or civil nature; but, as I understand, although I have no authoritative information, the offence of which Mr. M'Hugh was guilty was one of criminal contempt, and therefore there is no privilege.

MR. JOHN REDMOND hoped the Speaker would bear with him for a moment. He submitted that the case was precisely similar to that which occurred last year in connection with the same hon. Member, when it was held that privilege arose, and a Committee was appointed. The contempt consisted in not having given such an apology as Judge Ross considered proper, and he did not think that that brought the case within the category of criminal contempt.

*THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.) remarked that this was not a matter for which the Executive was responsible.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: What business is it of yours, then?

*MR. ATKINSON said he happened to be furnished with a copy of the order on which the warrant was issued. The order, dated 18th April, 1902, stated that the contempt consisted in publishing in the *Sligo Champion* newspaper, of which the hon. Member was editor and registered proprietor, resolutions passed at meetings of the Irish National League, interfering with the receiver in the management of a certain estate under the Landed Estates Court. That was the order. He pronounced no opinion on the particular nature of the contempt, but he thought it only right to give the House this information.

MR. JOHN REDMOND thought that great service had been done to the interest he wished to forward by the intervention of the right hon. and learned Gentleman. This document showed clearly that it was not a case of criminal contempt at all. The dispute, moreover, was more than a year old, and it was notorious that it had been settled some eight or nine months ago. He did not know why the prosecution should have been proceeded with, unless for the sake of embarrassing those who were anxious to pass the Land Bill.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) drew attention to what he called the parallel case of Mr. E. Dwyer Gray in support of the contention that Mr. M'Hugh's contempt was not of a criminal nature.

*Mr. SPEAKER: In the case of Mr. M'Hugh, a Committee was appointed last year, and its Report, after dealing with the facts, states—

> "Your Committee beg to report that there is no distinction to be drawn between the case of criminal contempt and other indictable offences."

The privilege of Parliament does not extend to such cases, and the House is not called upon to take any further steps. It is always for the Speaker to say whether a *primâ facie* question of privilege is raised. If it is a case of criminal contempt, privilege does not arise any more than in cases of ordinary indictable offences, and here I think it is perfectly clear that this is a case of criminal contempt. That is clear on the facts stated in the order of the Court; and, therefore, I should not be justified in leaving the question to be argued and the time of the House to be taken up in a matter which I ought not to leave to discussion, because, by the practice and law of the House, the privilege of Parliament does not extend to the present case.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: I beg to submit, Sir, that you are not in a position to come to a conclusion as to whether or not this is a case of criminal contempt. That is the very question to be inquired into.

*Mr. SPEAKER: The facts have been stated by the hon. Member himself, and the certified order of the Court is before me, and on the face of it, as I have said, this is a case of criminal contempt. I assure the hon. Member that I have the greatest desire to leave these cases to the House whenever there appears to be any ground for it; at the same time it is, of course, my duty to investigate the matter just as I would in any ordinary case of privilege, and determine whether there is a *primâ facie* case or not.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Just one word more——

*Mr. SPEAKER: I have given my decision upon the matter, and I am sure I have done it with every desire to be entirely fair.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: I am most reluctant to trespass, and I acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, most fully that you have shown every latitude. What I want to point out further is this—you are founding your ruling upon a Report of a Committee. That Report has never been submitted to the decision of the House.

*Mr. SPEAKER: I may be right or wrong, but it is impossible for me to allow continued argument after I have given my decision.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: As a matter of practice, Mr. Speaker, may I ask, with great respect, can a Report——

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member for Waterford put that point.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): This is the way to receive the King when he comes.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND asked the Chief Secretary if he had any information as to the statement that Mr. M'Hugh had been deprived of the customary privileges of first-class misdemeanants.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. Wyndham, Dover): I only received notice of this Question a few minutes ago, and I am not in a position to give any information as to the treatment accorded to the hon. Member for Leitrim in Sligo prison. The hon. Member has been arrested in pursuance of the action of the ordinary Courts of law and not at the instance of the Irish Government. On receiving notice of the hon. Member's Question I directed telegraphic inquiries to be made as to the facts and the classification of the hon. Member as a prisoner.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [Lords] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of

Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz: Cardiff Railway Bill [Lords]; Preston, Chorley, and Horwich Tramways Bill [Lords]; Torquay Corporation Water Bill [Lords]; British Gas Light Company (Norwich) Bill [Lords]; Tynemouth and District Tramways Bill [Lords]; Worthing Corporation (Tramways) Bill [Lords]; Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation Bill [Lords]; London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Bill [Lords]; Port Talbot Railway and Docks Bill [Lords]; St. Philip's Chapel (Regent Street) Bill [Lords]; King's College, London Bill [Lords]; Aston Manor Improvement Bill [Lords]; Hastings Tramways (Extensions) Bill [Lords]; South Lancashire Tramways Bill [Lords]; Dewsbury, Batley, and Birstal Tramways Bill [Lords]; Chard Corporation Gas and Electricity Bill [Lords]; Pontypridd Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; Jewish Colonisation Association Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

SUBSTITUTED BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That in respect of the following Bills introduced pursuant to the provisions of The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, and which the Chairman of Ways and Means had directed to originate in the House of Lords, the Standing Orders have been complied with, viz: Scottish Central Electric Power (Substituted) Bill [Lords]; Scottish Ontario and Manitoba Land Company, Limited (Substituted) Bill [Lords]; Hutchesons' Hospital and Hutchesons' Educational Trust (Substituted) Bill [Lords].

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with viz.: Military Lands Provisional Orders Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, vi : Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 17) Bill; Local Government Provisional Order (No. 18) Bill; Broughty Ferry Gas Provisional Order Bill; Hamilton Burgh Provisional Order Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time To-morrow.

PATENT OFFICE EXTENSION BILL (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred pursuant to the Order of the House of the 28th day of May last, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz.: Patent Office Extension Bill.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1899.

The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS reported, That, after conferring with the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords, for the purpose of determining in which House of Parliament the respective Bills should be first considered, under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, they had determined that the Bills contained in the following List should originate in the House of Lords, viz.:—Scottish Central Electric Power Bill; Scottish Ontario and Manitoba Land Company, Limited, Bill; Hutcheson's Hospital and Hutcheson's Educational Trust Bill.

PETITIONS.

BURGH POLICE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Argyll, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.

Petitions against: from Taunton; and Romford; to lie upon the Table.

COAL MINES REGULATION BILL.

Petition from Atherton, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petition from Kidderminster, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL.

Petitions against: from Maidstone; and Northwich; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL, AND LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.

Petition from Heywood, against: to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.

Petitions against: from Maidstone; and Northwich; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Grangemouth, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT (1894) AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Govan, against; to lie upon the Table.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.

Petitions against: from Newferry; Thirsk; and Taunton; to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petitions against (praying to be heard by Counsel): from Southend-on-Sea Corporation; Master, Wardens, and Commonalty of Watermen and Lightermen of the River Thames; Public Wharfingers adjoining the Port of London; Great Eastern Railway Company; James Hilditch Gough; North London Railway Company; and Southend on Sea; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill.

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL.

Petition from Willesden Junction, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Hammersmith; St. Leonards; and Kidderminster; to lie upon the Table.

SHEEP SCAB BILL.

Petition from Argyll, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE DISPUTES BILL.

Petition from Atherton, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

INTOXICATING LIQUORS (LICENCES REFUSED).

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 27th May—*Mr. Cochrane*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 194.]

ARRESTS FOR DRUNKENNESS (IRELAND).

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 18th May—*Mr. Sloan*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 195.]

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Thirtieth Annual Report by the Accountant for Scotland to the Scotch Education Department [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRISTAN DA CUNHA.

Copy presented, of further correspondence relating to the Island of Tristan da Cunha (in continuation of [C. 8357] February 1897) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Income Tax Deductions on Debentures.

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, under Sub-section 3 of Section 24 of the Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1888, Income Tax on debentures or debenture stocks should be deducted at the rate of Income Tax in force at the time of payment of the interest.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) Yes.

Board of Education and the Navy League.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that the secretary of an association called the Navy League is in the habit of writing teachers of public elementary schools, with copies of leaflets and pamphlets, urging their reading and circulation as part of the curriculum of the schools; and whether this practice has the sanction or approval of the inspectors or the Board of Education.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) In November last the Board received a letter from the Navy League stating that they had been issuing a circular letter to the headmasters of elementary schools, together with a copy of a lecture on the Navy, inquiring whether, if the master was in sympathy with the object, he would have the lecture given to the boys in his school. The League at the same time asked for the co-operation and sanction of the Board for the work they were trying to accomplish. In reply, the Board stated that, while they sympathised with the general object of the League, and would raise no objection to instruction on these lines being given in any school where the managers and master desired it, they were not prepared to prescribe lessons on the Navy as part of an obligatory course for all schools receiving Government grants, nor could they recommend or allow their inspectors to recommend any particular books or maps.

British Trade with Foreign Countries, India and the Colonies.

MR. LAMBERT (Devonshire, South Molton): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will state the imports and exports of the United Kingdom with foreign countries, self-governing colonies, India, and other British possessions separately, for the periods 1881–5, 1886–90, and for each year since.

(*Answered by Mr. Bonar Law.*) If the hon. Member will move for a Return I shall be happy to supply this information.

Overloading of Foreign Ships in British Ports.

SIR ROBERT ROPNER (Stockton): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if, in view of the fact that a foreign vessel with cargo on board can call at a port in the United Kingdom and take on board bunker coals and by so doing become overloaded and below what her fixed load-line would have been if under the British flag, he will consider the advisability of obtaining for the Board of Trade the power to detain such foreign ships as would be done in the case of British vessels.

(*Answered by Mr. Bonar Law.*) The inequality to which my hon. friend calls attention exists. The Law as it stands only enables the Board of Trade to detain a foreign ship for overloading when she takes on board cargo at a port in the United Kingdom; and the Board are advised that bunker coal is not cargo within the meaning of the Act. Upon the point of legislation I would refer my hon. friend to a Question put on the 23rd April† by the hon. Member for Tynemouth and the reply thereto given by my right hon. friend the President of the Board of Trade. The matter referred to might very properly be dealt with in such a Bill.

Honorary Rank of Major for Inspectors of Army Schools.

MR. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will consider the advisability of modifying the terms of the recent Army Order granting the honorary rank of Major to inspectors of Army schools on completing fifteen years commissioned service on full pay, seeing that no inspector of Army schools now on the Active List can complete fifteen years such service before reaching the age limit, that the average age on first appointment of all inspectors of Army schools promoted to be such since 1st January 1899 is over forty-four years, and that prior to appointment as such, inspectors of Army schools have rendered exceptionally long service in senior warrant and non-commissioned ranks.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxi., 223.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The Army Order in question granted the honorary rank of Major after fifteen years commissioned service on full pay to quartermasters and riding masters as well as inspectors of Army schools. Prior to the Army Order quartermasters and riding masters were granted the rank when in special posts, while inspectors of Army schools were not eligible for the rank. When it was decided to extend occasions for the grant of the privilege to the quartermasters and riding masters, it was also resolved to include the inspectors. It so happens that none of the present inspectors are eligible, but there is no reason to suppose that this will be so in the future. It would, I fear, give ground of complaint if any special advantages were given over the quartermasters and riding masters of the same standing.

South African War—Medal Clasps for Hospital Nurses.

Sir JOHN LENG (Dundee): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will explain why, seeing that the doctors, nurses, men, and orderlies serving in hospitals in South Africa have all been allowed hitherto to wear clasps with their medals, the privilege has been withdrawn from the nurses, and from them only.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The grant of clasps is confined to those persons who are either combatants or intended to go under fire. The privilege cannot therefore be extended to the nurses.

Army Pensions—Boy Service.

Mr. REGINALD LUCAS (Portsmouth : To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, and, if so, upon what terms, boy service in the Army is recognised as counting for pension.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) Boy's service counts towards pension under the same rules as man's service, except that ½d. a day is deducted for every complete year of service under the age of eighteen.

Indian Army and Army Service Corps Appointments for Woolwich Cadets.

Mr. AGG-GARDNER (Cheltenham): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he would consider the advisability of extending to the cadets at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich a share of the direct appointments to the Indian Army and to the Army Service Corps, which are given to the cadets at Sandhurst at the end of every term.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The course of teaching and training at the Academy is framed on the requirements of the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers, the branches of the service to which the cadets are allotted. The suggestion of my hon. friend would not, therefore, appear practicable without altering the whole scheme of instruction.

Expulsion of "Times" Correspondent from Russia.

Mr. MARTIN (Worcestershire, Droitwich): To ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he has received any communication from His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg concerning the manner of the expulsion of the correspondent of *The Times* from the Russian dominions; whether such expulsion was in accordance with precedent, seeing that it was directed against an English newspaper and not against an individual; and whether His Majesty's Ambassador took all steps possible to protect a British subject, of personal repute, residing within the dominions of a friendly Power.

(*Answered by Mr. A. J. Balfour.*) A Report has been received from His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg on the subject, but it does not add materially to the accounts that have already been published. We are not aware of any precedent for the expulsion of the correspondent of a British newspaper on account of the tone adopted by the newspaper. His Majesty's Ambassador himself took steps to obtain, if possible, the rescission of the order, or, at any rate, to protect Mr. Braham from unduly harsh treatment. Sir C. Scott has been called upon to supply by telegram full particulars of all the circumstances which accompanied Mr. Braham's expulsion.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Indulgence Passages for British Officers.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE (Sussex, Horsham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state how many indulgence passages have been granted and how many refused to officers proceeding home on leave after the South African War; and whether, seeing that the average cost of a passage home and out represents about six months' pay to a subaltern officer, when he is considering the inducements which may be held out to young men of moderate means to enter the Service, he will consider the desirability of giving some assistance or allowance to officers who are proceeding home on leave after a long period of active service during a time of war.

* THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): The number of indulgence passages granted to officers proceeding home on leave since the cessation of hostilities is 467. This number is in addition to the considerable number of officers on leave whose services were utilised, on duty with troops. No indulgence passages were refused to officers, but owing to the great rush of officers home on leave it was impossible to find immediate accommodation for all, and several officers preferred to pay their passage home rather than wait at the port of embarkation.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE: Will the right hon. Gentleman take into consideration cases I can submit to him?

* MR. BRODRICK: Certainly, but I would remind the hon. Member that in the first few months after the war it was impossible to grant indulgence passages to all officers who asked for them.

Longmoor Camp.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if it is the intention of the War Office to drain the camp at Longmoor into a brook which is a confluent of the River Rother; and, if so, will he state what precautions will be taken to render the discharge of sewage into that brook innocuous before it reaches the Rother; and if, before any scheme is sanctioned for the disposal of the sewage from this camp, the opinion of the Local Government Board will be taken as to the suitability of the scheme, and as to how far it may fulfil the requirements which they impose upon local authorities who have to provide for the disposal of sewage.

* MR. BRODRICK: It is not contemplated to drain the camp at Longmoor directly into any brook or river. The sewage will be subjected to biolytic treatment on approved principles and the effluent will, as a further safeguard, be subjected to land treatment in accordance with the views held by the Local Government Board

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE: Will the local bodies affected be allowed to take samples of the effluent in order to have them tested?

* MR. BRODRICK: I shall be happy to confer with my hon. friend on that point.

The Cape "Ragging" Case.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask whether the Court-martial which will meet to-morrow for the trial of seven officers in connection with an incident that occurred at Cape Town in December, 1901, will be open to the public and the Press.

* MR. BRODRICK: I gather from the question of the hon. Member

that he thinks Courts-martial do not take place in public.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Just the reverse. The right hon. Gentleman must have turned a deaf ear to my question.

*MR. BRODRICK: This Court-martial is taking place in consequence of certain representations made by Mr. Stanford to the War Office. I have no control over the proceedings of the Court-martial. It has been convened by the military authorities in the ordinary course, and the authorities will do what they consider to be just and desirable to the parties concerned.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to give notice that on the Estimates I will call attention to the conduct of the right hon. Gentleman with reference to this matter.

Gunnery Practice in the Navy.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty has he now received the Report, called for by the Admiralty on 11th May, on the alleged waste of ammunition in the Mediterranean Fleet on 29th April last by eight battleships firing away over 7,000 rounds at distances and under conditions depriving the practice of utility as gunnery training for accuracy in marksmanship: what was the range at which the practice was conducted, the time it took, and the number and approximate value of the rounds fired; In what respects did this practice depart from the Admiralty regulation that the attainment of good shooting and proficiency in gunnery are always to be considered as taking precedence over all other duties; by whom was this practice ordered and its conditions prescribed, and by whom has the Report thereon been made: In view of the practice which had been adopted on 14th May last that the reasons of failure in gunnery practice are reported on by the admirals under whose orders the ships are acting, that the Reports are considered by the Admiralty, and such steps taken with regard to the individual officers concerned as in the opinion of the Admiralty are required, will he say whether any, and if so, what steps have been, or will be taken in this case.

* THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W.): The Report has been received. The Commander-in-Chief states that the practice on the occasion referred to was carried out with special care; the ranges were those prescribed in the Gunnery Manual—viz., from 600 yards to 1,800 yards; the time occupied was two hours. The firing was by eight battleships from 12-pounders on the turrets, 3-pounders, and aiming rifles. The number of rounds expended for the respective natures of guns was 720, 178, and 9,615, the last named being rifle ammunition only. The total cost of the ammunition expended was £875. The practice was ordered by the Commander-in-Chief, but there are some points of detail as to the conditions prescribed, which are absent from the Report. To make these points quite clear a further reference will be made to the Commander in-Chief.

In reply to a further Question Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER said the firing on the 29th April took place by order of the Commander in-Chief.

Official Reports of Parliamentary Debates in other Countries.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can say whether a full official Report of the Proceedings in the Houses of Parliament is published daily during the session in the United States, Holland, or any other foreign country; and, if so, at what price these papers are sold to the public and to members of the Legislature; whether he can ascertain what is the annual cost to the Governments of the publication of these papers; and whether he could arrange that specimen copies of them should be exhibited in the Reading Room.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord CRANBORNE, Rochester): We have in our possession only a small part of the information asked for by the hon. Gentleman. If he desires it complete, information shall be obtained.

Registration of Money Lenders.

Mr. LOUGH: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the fact that under the Money Lenders Act, 1900, a money lender is required to be registered under his own name or his usual trade name, and in no other name, and with the address, or all the addresses, at which he carries on his business of money lending, and not to carry on his business at any address in respect of which he is not registered, and that the Commissioners of Inland Revenue issue certificates of registration which do not state the addresses for which the money lender is registered, and sometimes with the surname only, so that the certificate is insufficient for identification, he will request the Commissioners of Inland Revenue to furnish to the Judges of the several County Courts Returns showing up to date as far as possible, the names, trade names and other aliases, together with all the addresses, of registered money lenders.

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Ritchie, Croydon): The Commissioners of Inland Revenue do not grant certificates of registration under the Money Lenders Act, 1900. The form which they issue to a money lender who has applied for registration, and which is sometimes produced in Court as evidence thereof, is not a certificate of registration at all, but merely a formal acknowledgment of the receipt of the Return required by the regulations made under the Act. A certified copy of this Return duly stamped can be obtained for a charge of 2s. from the Head Office of Inland Revenue in London, Edinburgh or Dublin, as the case may be, and it is reasonable that a money lender desirous of proving in a Court of law that he has been duly registered, should do so by the production of such a certified copy. To furnish registrars of County Courts with the Returns suggested by the hon. Member would involve a good deal of trouble, and I do not know that it would serve any sufficient purpose.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): What Supply is to be taken next Thursday?

The PRIME MINISTER and FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): The Local Government Board Vote will be taken on Thursday.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): What Votes will follow? The Local Government Board Vote does not often occupy a whole day.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: Can the right hon. Gentleman arrange to take on Thursday week Section 3 of Vote 8 of the Navy Estimates, so as to enable us to discuss the Cunard agreement and subsidy.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I would like to consider more in detail the hon. Gentleman's question; but speaking without prejudice I think that the discussion of this particular subject on the Estimates rather belongs to the larger and more general question of the arrangements made in connection with the Atlantic combine. There are inconveniences in discussing the arrangements with the Cunard Company in the manner suggested by the hon. Member. There will be an opportunity given to discuss the subject, but as at present advised, I think it would be inconvenient to take the Cunard agreement as divorced from the general question of the combine. In reply to the right hon. Baronet, I will endeavour, through the usual channels, to find out what is believed to be the most convenient Vote to be taken after the Local Government Board Vote.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): What will be the business for Friday?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Assuming, as I imagine I may do, that the Second Reading of the Finance Bill is obtained to-morrow, the first orders on Friday will be the Employment of Children Bill as amended by the Standing Committee, the Education (Borrowing) Bill, and other small measures.

THE FISCAL POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH (Bristol, W.): I am anxious to ask you a Question on a point of order with reference to the debate which will be initiated this evening. It was, I think, understood by some hon. Members during the course of the debate on the adjournment for Whitsuntide that some opportunity would occur in the course of the debate on the Finance Bill for a full discussion of the new fiscal policy suggested, not for present, but for future adoption by the Colonial Secretary. I wish to ask whether a discussion of that policy would be in order either on the Amendment of my right hon. friend the Member for Sleaford, or on the main question on the Second Reading of the Finance Bill.

*MR. SPEAKER: No; I have considered that question, because I was aware of the great interest taken in the subject, and that probably many hon. Members were anxious, if possible, to discuss it on the Finance Bill. I am clearly of opinion that this matter is not relevant to this Bill. The question of the merits of preferential duties between this country and the colonies is not raised in any way on the Finance Bill; and unless the ordinary rules of relevancy do not apply to the Finance Bill I am obliged to rule that such a discussion is out of order.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Do I understand you, Sir, to say that no allusion whatever to the situation created by the proposals which have been made by the Government as to the future would be admissible in the course of any observations made on that subject?

*MR. SPEAKER: To prevent any allusion whatever being made would be impossible. I merely say that I will endeavour to follow that ruling, and that I shall watch with, if possible, more than usual attention what may be said by the right hon. Gentleman and remind him if my ruling is transgressed.

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University): May I ask whether a general discussion as to the expediency of taxing the food of the people would be in order on the Second Reading.

*MR. SPEAKER: I cannot add anything to what I have said. I must ask hon. Members to endeavour to follow the view I have expressed; and if I think that any hon. Member is going unduly beyond my ruling I will take care to call his attention to the fact.

*MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): I quite recognise what has fallen from you, Sir, but, in view of the expression which you used, that unless the ordinary Rules were put aside, you could not admit of the debate, I respectfully submit that the Second Reading of the Finance Bill stands in a very different category from that of any other Bill. It takes the place of the old Customs Bill, and there are abundant precedents in the records of the House to show that on the Second Reading of the Customs Bill a general debate was allowed on the whole financial policy of the Government, or on anything which had been said outside the House by a member of the Cabinet. I am on perfectly safe ground when I press home in the strongest possible manner that that was allowed on all possible occasions in old times. The Finance Bill, which has taken the place of the Customs Bill, is founded on a Resolution passed in Committee on May 12—

> "That it is expedient to amend the law in relation to the National Debt, Customs, and Inland Revenue."

The Bill is to carry out that Resolution, and, therefore, it does raise the whole question of the fiscal policy of the Government, and it cannot surely be that this House is so fettered, cribbed, cabined, and confined [MINISTERIAL Cries of "Order."]

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. The hon. Member is not now merely addressing himself to a point of order, but is now making a speech in reply to my ruling. I have considered all these matters, and I do not agree with the hon. Member in his argument as to the practice upon the Finance Bill. [MR. ELLIS: Customs Bills.] The Resolutions passed in Committee were only to enable matters to be put into the Finance Bill, and we have now this Bill before us and not the Resolutions. No rules have been laid down as to the Finance Bill which differentiate it from any other Bill.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Is it not a fact that although discussion has not been allowed——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. I have given my ruling, and I cannot allow the continuance of this argument.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: It was not an argument, but a Question I wished to put.

NATIONAL EXPENDITURE.

Ordered, That the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on National Expenditure in Session 1902 be referred to the Select Committee on National Expenditure.—(*Sir James Fergusson.*)

NEW BILLS.

POLICE (SUPERANNUATION) BILL.

"To amend The Police Act, 1890, with respect to Superannuation," presented by Mr. Cochrane; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 238.]

TRADE MARKS (COTTON WARES) BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to the registration of Trade Marks in respect of Cotton Wares," presented by Sir William Houldsworth, supported by Sir William Holland; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 239.]

METROPOLITAN STREETS BILL.

"To amend the Metropolitan Streets Act, 1867," presented by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas, supported by Mr. Cochrane; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 240.]

FINANCE BILL.

[SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) rose to move: "That this House considers that the financial policy of His Majesty's Government, in the remission of indirect taxation imposed only last year for purposes of a permanent character, involves a needless and injurious disturbance of trade, and a serious loss to the revenue, without substantial relief to the consumer; and that, if any remission of indirect taxation is considered necessary by His Majesty's Government, such remission ought to be made by a reduction of the duties proposed to be levied on tea or other articles of general consumption." He said, I shall endeavour most carefully, Sir, to observe your ruling with regard to allusions to the fiscal proposals which have recently been made, but I confess it will be very difficult to avoid them in the arguments I wish to address to the House. I hope I shall not be transgressing your ruling when I say that the situation in which the House approached the discussion of the financial proposals of the Government is of a very unusual, and, indeed, a remarkable and almost an unprecedented character. It reminds me very much of a sentence in a letter which a great English Statesman wrote to me on one occasion to this effect:

> "Remember that the vicissitudes of political life are endless."

Certainly nobody could desire a more perfect vindication of that statement than the position in which we find ourselves to-day. Three months ago nobody, no one at least in his senses, would have dreamt that the present Government would have come forward during this session with a proposal to repeal the duty on grain, which only last session they imposed themselves, and avowedly for purposes of a permanent character, and with the object of broadening the basis of taxation. So much so that when the announcement was made it was received with amazement and universal surprise by friends and foes of the Government alike; with ridicule and contempt by the Government's enemies, and with dismay and disgust by innumerable friends. Who could have imagined only a few weeks ago, when Parliament was occupied in what I suppose we should call its normal proceedings, when the youth and flower of the Party who sit around me here were engaged in nothing more sensational than nightly sallies upon the Secretary of State for War and what they delight to call his phantom Army Corps; when some of the keenest intellects in the House of Commons were more or less befogged by the intricacies and morasses of legislation upon Irish land; or more recently were staggered by the transformation scenes which followed in such quick succession on the London Education Bill; that a greater, more important, and far more serious transformation scene than any one of them was even then awaiting us, and that we were to be confronted all at once, if not with a complete reversal of our fiscal system yet with changes going down so deeply to its very roots that they might well give cause for the most serious, the gravest, and most anxious reflection to politicans of all classes and all creeds both in Parliament and in the country. Yet so it is; and in my judgment we owe the present situation most clearly, as it seems to me and as I hope to demonstrate to the House, in the first place, to the ineptitude, shall I say the blundering ineptitude, of a single Minister, who, I presume, insisted as part of his financial scheme upon the repeal of the duty upon grain, and, secondly, to the supine and nerveless inaction of a Cabinet, whose members apparently, with one exception, were indifferent and willing to agree to it. That was indeed a masterpiece of statecraft, reserved for the new Chancellor of the Exchequer—an effort of financial genius, destined, no doubt, to place him as a heaven-born financier on a pinnacle of enduring fame. But it will be found ere very long that the pinnacle of fame is only a monument of folly, and that the heaven-born financier has made an irretrievable mistake. Why do I say this? Because the Chancellor of the Exchequer by his unfortunate and most unwise proposal has apparently precipitated a movement which, although I personally approve of it, is from its nature essentially a matter for great deliberation, for which neither his Party nor the country were prepared, and which in some respects I think is permature. Again because, reading between the lines, and even without the necessity of doing so, for it is obvious now from the speech at Birmingham alone that the repeal of the duty must have been entirely opposed to the views of the Secretary for the Colonies and destructive of his aims, and, above all, to his cherished and well known views upon colonial policy, if he had quietly accepted it. For the moment, however, the policy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer appears to have prevailed over that of the Secretary of State; but it was only for the moment. For a few days afterwards the world was startled and aroused by the reply delivered at Birmingham in a speech which was undoubtedly a great speech, announcing an Imperial policy and proclaiming a great principle which for forty or fifty years the Colonial Secretary has been the first of leading English Statesmen in Great Britain with the courage to uphold. What is that principle, and what is the position that it was designed to meet? They have been described by both the Secretary for the Colonies and the Prime Minister on two different occasions. The objects of my right hon. friends are, so far as I can gather, mainly two. One of them is to cement the union between the colonies and ourselves, and to bind them, if possible, closer together; and, for this purpose, to keep, to promote, and to increase our trade with the colonies, even if by doing so we might lose something of our trade with foreign countries.

MR. SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman is getting a little beyond the limits of my ruling.

*MR. CHAPLIN: Of course, Sir, I must bow to your ruling, but it will be very difficult for me to convey my argument to the House with regard to the effects of the repeal of the corn duty if I cannot make any further allusion to the two great objects of my right hon. friends.

MR. SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman began by saying, "What is the object of the policy of the Colonial Secretary?" That seemed to promis a full discussion of the whole of his views.

*MR. CHAPLIN: No, Sir, I do not want to lead to that; I merely wished to put the broad aspect of the question; but if you tell me I shall be transgressing your ruling in so doing I will pass at once to those considerations which relate most closely and distinctly to the repeal of the corn duty, alone.

*MR. SPEAKER: I do consider that the right hon. Gentleman would be transgressing. I do not complain of what he has said so far as he has gone, but if I had allowed him to proceed it would have become the general subject of debate.

*MR. CHAPLIN: Under those circumstances I must content myself with saying broadly that the principal objects of my right hon. friends were two—one to increase the trade between the mother country and the colonies, and the other to acquire the power of retaliation if this country or the colonies were assailed by foreign hostile tariffs. That was the great principle to which I rejoiced to hear that my right hon. friends had both of them subscribed, and that is a principle which I have not the smallest doubt the verdict of the country will finally endorse. That being, as I understand, the policy which the Government have now held before us——

SIR M. HICKS BEACH (Bristol, W.): No.

*MR. CHAPLIN: The Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary most undoubtedly have done so, as I should be able to convince my right hon. friend if I were in order in making the statements I desired to make. He has not had the advantage, as I have had, of hearing two speeches from the Prime Minister on the subject; and I say that that being their policy, there was one point in connection with it which to me is more incomprehensible than ever, and which becomes more and more so every hour, when I see them deliberately throwing away the only weapon in their armoury which would have enabled them to give real effect to this great principle to which, whatever my right hon. friend may say, the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary have beyond all doubt committed themselves. That is a proceeding as to which I have never from the first been able to understand the reason, or reasons, by which the Government were prompted in the repeal of the corn duty, and as this is the first occasion we have had of doing so in debate, I desire to examine them as carefully as I can—and with the permission of the House—I will proceed to do so. Now Sir, the House will recollect that in remitting indirect taxation the Chancellor of the Exchequer told us that his choice lay between tea and corn. Tea, he said, possessed many advantages; it was the easiest and the least contentious subject of taxation, and, if my right hon. friend had only acted up to that opinion how very different would have been his own position, the position of his Party, and that of an immense number of his supporters in the House to-day! Unfortunately he elected to take corn. And why? Because, as he said, it is the food of our people; it is the food of our horses and our cattle; it is a raw material, and it has the disadvantage of being somewhat inelastic. But is it not the case that each one of those arguments had precisely the same force at the time the duty was imposed? Of course they had, and the right hon. Gentleman knows it as well as I do, and that if they are arguments in favour of the repeal of the duty to-day, they were equally arguments against it at the time when he supported its imposition. But since the duty was put on my right hon. friend has discovered something else—and here I am bound to say that the Prime Minister, when I had the honour of waiting upon him with a recent deputation, went even further than the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for on that occasion he tried to persuade the farming portion of his audience that this duty operated as a great burden on the raw material which they used; and that consequently the class which had the most reason to object to the duty was the farming class.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): Hear, hear!

*MR. CHAPLIN: The Chancellor of the Exchequer says "Hear, hear," but I may observe that those two propositions were received with every mark of dissent, and loud cries of "No, no" from the gentlemen present who were chiefly concerned, and in reply to the right hon. Gentleman's cheer I can only put the opinion of the farmers themselves, who ought to know what they are about, because, unlike my right hon. friend, who speaks only from theory, they speak from actual experience. The Chancellor of the Exchequer will find out, if he takes the trouble to inquire, that while it is perfectly true that a limited section of the farming class, whose operations are devoted to what is called "feeding," are not greatly enamoured of the duty on grain, yet the whole body of the farming class throughout the country are absolutely unanimous with regard to the duty on flour. They are so for the best reasons in the world—reasons which I gave in detail on the occasion of the deputation to which I have referred, and which I need not repeat except to say this—that it was found that the result of the duty on flour was incidentally to reduce the cost of feeding stuffs all round; and everybody who knows anything about the subject must be aware that that is a very important matter indeed to the farmer.

But, worst of all, the right hon. Gentleman has made another discovery, viz., that this duty is open to misrepresentation. I wonder when he made it. Most of us made it—and there was little difficulty in doing it—during the prolonged debates on this question last session, and if ever it was to be acted upon then was the time. But the misrepresentation which was patent to everyone in the House, with, I suppose, the exception of the right hon. Gentleman, did not prevent the Government from imposing it. And if misrepresentation is a reason for repealing a Government measure, what has the right hon. Gentleman to say about the Education Act of last year, or the Agricultural Rates Act of some years ago, or half a dozen other measures, which were quite as much open to misrepresentation? As a matter of fact, I have always been of opinion that it is the Education Act which has done us, as a Party, more harm in the country than any other measure passed by the present Government—though, of course, the Prime Minister will never admit it—and this poor little innocent duty on corn is to be made the scapegoat in consequence. But did anyone ever dream of repealing the Education Act because it was alleged, and I think truly, to be grossly misrepresented in the country? Of course not, and why on earth are we to do so in this case? But then he considers that it could never have remained as an integral portion of the fiscal system of the country. Why not? He gave no reasons in support of that view. It can be only a matter of opinion, and all experience and probability is against him. As a matter of fact, it did remain an integral part of our fiscal system for at least twenty-five years during the time of Gladstone, Bright, and Cobden, all of whom were among the leading free traders of their day. I was very sorry to hear the Prime Minister give his countenance to that view. He thinks it has been conclusively proved that even the 1s. duty in what he called "the struggle for a fiscal existence" could never have held its own as an independent tax. But where, and when, and by whom has this been proved? With great respect, I entirely dispute the statement. The only thing that has been proved on this point is that a Government with a great majority, but with incredible weakness, yielded in this matter to purely party clamour, and, what is worse, after that clamour had practically ceased, as soon as the result of the duty was known by experience to have been absolutely harmless. And this from a Government who were careful to tell us through the mouth of their Prime Minister that they had every confidence in the common sense of their countrymen, and again, through the mouth of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, that they were not a cowardly Government, and were perfectly prepared to fight, if need be, the battle of the big loaf and the little loaf once more! I do not know that there is any great heroism or superhuman courage needed for that. Ever since the passing of the Reform Bill, in every contest I have had to fight in my constituency, I have had to fight that battle on every single occasion. I do not know that it ever did me much harm, and, what is more, I do not think it ever will. The Prime Minister added that in any case this tax could never have been permanent, and he seemed to found his statement upon the belief that whatever we did, the other side, when they came in—as come in at some time, of course, they must—[OPPOSITION cries of "No, no,"] — would be certain and bound to repeal it. Well, Sir, I should have left it to them. It was their business, not ours. More than that, it would have been absolutely consistent from their point of view, but it was absolutely inconsistent with everything that we have said and done on this side of the House. But I doubt his statement very greatly, and I doubt it for a reason with which I think the House will agree is a good reason.

I have been trying to ascertain to the best of my ability what are the prospects of the wheat harvest of the world for the coming year, and the result of my inquiries is that it promises to be a good, and quite possibly a great one. If that is so, it is as certain as I am addressing the House that there will be a fall in the price of wheat of several shillings per quarter, and if it should exceed 4s. then the price of bread will go down in proportion. Under these circumstances I ask is it conceivable that any Government in the world—even this Government—with bread sensibly lower in spite of the duty, should deliberately elect to throw away a revenue of £2,500,000 a year for absolutely no reason in the world whatever. I do not believe it for a moment. What I do believe is that if my right hon. friend had not made this intolerable mistake, the whole thing would have been forgotten by this time. The superstition against the shilling duty on corn, and it is only a superstition, would have died out altogether, and I think it is quite conceivable that the Colonial Secretary in the course of time might have been able to make the further trifling addition to the duty he mentioned, with the general agreement of the country and of all parties concerned; for it has been established by incontestable evidence that you can put a small duty upon wheat without affecting in any way the position of the consumer. Now, Sir, I have endeavoured to examine to the best of my ability the various reasons which have been adduced in support of the remission of this duty, and I have searched in vain to find one, with a single exception, that was not evident and ought not to have been thought of before the tax was imposed. But that exception is, indeed, a strange one. I do not think anybody who had not heard it would have believed it. It so happens that it has turned out that the shilling duty did confer a little gain upon two classes in the country, namely, the millers and the farmers, but when the Government found this out they were horrified at having taken to themselves that unclean and cursed thing, Protection. And so this little gain my right hon. friend told the deputation was now to be withdrawn from two of the most deserving, and, at the same time, the most depressed industries in the country, although on the right hon. Gentleman's own admission, which he has stated over and over again, it had never done the slightest harm to any human being in the world. Why! the dog-in-the-manger is not in it with His Majesty's Government in this case. And why on earth this Government, above all others, should elect to play this very unenviable *rôle* towards those who have been for generations the best and most loyal supporters the Government has ever had in the world, passes my comprehension.

If it is hard to find reasons in support of this repeal, it is easy to find many against it. Perhaps the strongest reason of all is the fact that last year you deliberately declared that this tax was to be permanent. On the faith of that statement put forward by the Ministry capital was invested, mills were re-opened, industries were started, and farmers bought more stock because feeding stuffs in consequence had become cheaper. Now all this is to be thrown away because instead of being permanent the tax on corn is to be at once repealed. Those who have been misled, those who relied on the statement of the Government and have lost their capital in consequence have the deepest possible ground for complaint. In face of these explicit statements which were made by his predecessor last session upon this point in particular, I am at a loss to understand how the present Chancellor of the Exchequer can justify his action. Just one year ago to-day, Mr. Speaker—for it was on the 9th of June, 1902—my right hon. friend the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, whom we all rejoice to see back again in the House—and I say that entirely apart from all considerations as to whether he is likely to support me or not on this occasion—made this statement. He said—

> "It had never been the habit of the House to impose a new indirect tax for one year only, and that for the obvious reason that it would leave everyone uncertain as to the future, for imposing any indirect tax for only twelve months would undoubtedly interfere with trade for a reason which would probably be entirely inadequate, and which no Chancellor of the Exchequer would ever think of putting forward."

[MINISTERIAL cries of "Hear, hear!"] But that is exactly what the present Chancellor has done, and I shall await with increased interest the right hon. Gentleman's defence of his action today. It is no use for the Government to say that they have lost from amongst their ranks their late Chancellor of the Exchequer, because they heard his statement. They sat by his side and they acquiesced in all he said, and everyone of them was as fully responsible as my right hon. friend himself. Therefore, I shall await with great interest what the right hon. Gentleman has to say.

To go to another subject which is an infinitely smaller matter, although in itself it is by no means unimportant, I say that you are deliberately throwing away a revenue of £2,500,000 a year which it injured nobody to raise and which it will benefit no one to remit. Sir, what I believe everyone expected, and what most people wanted to see, was the duty remitted on tea instead of on corn, for the relative advantage to the consumer between the repeal of the duty on corn on the one hand, and the remission of the duty on tea on the other hand, cannot bear comparison for a single moment. Moreover, the last addition to the tea duty was made expressly for the purposes of the war, and tea growers, especially in India and Ceylon, in my opinion, most undoubtedly had a very strong and serious claim. Let me take the case of tea first. I believe the Chancellor of the Exchequer could have reduced the duty on tea by one-half. If this had been done the duty would have been 3d. per lb. I understand that the ordinary consumption of tea in a cottage family comes to something like 1 lb. per week. If that is so that would have been a gain of 3d. in the lb. to the good in every week throughout the year to every little cottage home in the country. What are they going to get by the repeal of the duty on corn? The duty on flour is 5d. a cwt., and in every sack of flour there are two and a half cwts., consequently the duty on a sack of flour is 1s. 0½d. But a sack of flour makes from ninety-five to 100 loaves, and if you divide 1s. 0½d. into 100 loaves you will find that the 1s. duty comes to something just under half a farthing for each loaf. I believe there is no coin in general circulation small enough to enable anyone to pay this fractional addition to the price of bread, and that is why the price of bread all through the country has never altered in consequence of this tax, [OPPOSITION Cries of "Oh, oh!"] unless where it was done for political purposes immediately after its imposition, and that was only for the moment. I think that when the official records are consulted it will be found that I am absolutely correct in my contention that the repeal of the duty on corn will be of no benefit whatever to the consumer.

There is one other argument against repeal which I do think the right hon. Gentleman might have taken into consideration. Whatever value he may place upon his own consistency, I think he really might have had some consideration for the views and the position of a great number of his supporters—men who through evil and through good report have so loyally supported the present Government. Why, Sir, there-is hardly one among them who for weeks and months has not spent his time and energies and his eloquence in defending, and successfully defending, the very policy which is now to be abandoned, and in respect of which my right hon. friend is calling upon those Gentlemen to recant every word on the subject they have ever said, and to go forward and confess that in all they have said and done they have been absolutely wrong, although they still believe and know it to be absolutely right. I can tell him that the feeling of resentment against a Minister who attempts to drag his followers through such muddy paths as this is as deep and bitter as, in my opinion, it is thoroughly well founded, nor do I think that it will be very easily allayed. Now, I have said enough on a subject, which to me, I say quite honestly, is the most painful and the most distasteful I ever recollect throughout my long connection with the Tory Party.

It only remains to consider what is the course that is right, and which I ought to take to-night. The followers of the Government at the present time are undoubtedly placed in a most extraordinary position. I find little but confusion in their counsels and indecision in their action. It is useless to seek guidance or leadership from them, and we must rely upon ourselves. The views which I entertain upon this special duty are views which I have urged and which I have held for many years. They are strengthened and confirmed by the tests and the results of actual experience to-day, and even those who are most opposed to me will, I think, admit that I have supported them by arguments which hitherto have not been met and which are not very easily replied to. I am also in favour of that policy—I hope I shall not transgress again—which is held out to us for the future with regard to our colonies, but this Budget is diametrically opposed to it. This Budget, and its author in particular, the other night were welcomed effusively and with open arms, by the enemies of the Government—the very men who so bitterly opposed us in the policy on which last year we were all of us united, and in which a great number of us still most thoroughly believe. I warned my right hon. friend, the Prime Minister, when he recently received a great deputation that if the present course should be persisted in I was convinced it might lead to lasting injury, if not possibly to disaster, to his Party. My words were little heeded at that time, but who is there to say to-day in the light of all that is going on, and what we see and know around us, that they were idle or altogether unneeded? I still believe, as I believed at that time, that the wise course, the right course, and the only course, which even points to safer and calmer waters, is to retrace our steps in this respect and go back to the surer and safer ground which was left to us by the predecessor of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Some loss of credit and reputation to the Government undoubtedly there would be, but that is better than a great disaster to the Party. I appeal, then, to the Government once again, even at the eleventh hour, to hold out to us the hope that at later stages of the Bill they will take this course; otherwise it must be, and it will be, my duty to go to a division on this occasion. It may be, for all I know, in that case, that we shall have the big battalions on both sides of the House ranged against us. I neither know, nor do I care, for it will not deter me by a single hair's breadth from the course which I know is the only clear, the only plain, and the only straightforward course which is open to those who, like myself, remain by their opinions on that point. And that being so, I have neither doubt nor hesitation for a moment in following the path which is marked out for me to-night by conviction and consistency alike, and that is to vote for the Amendment, which I submit with confidence that is fearless and complete—yes, Mr. Speaker, and to a tribunal higher than Parliament, higher even than this House, for it is to the country and to the people that I appeal.

*MR. DAVID MACIVER (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to second the Amendment. I have the greatest pleasure in doing so. I am sure there is no one in this House or out of it, who would for one moment doubt my loyalty to the Party to which I belong. It is thirty years since I first had the honour of sitting in this House, and during all these years there has been no more loyal supporter of the Conservative Party than myself, and yet the words that occur to me in regard to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's attitude at present are words which I would not be allowed to use in this House. To my mind nothing could be more ill-judged than the proposal for the repeal of the grain duty. All the arguments used last year by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, my right hon. friend the Member for Bristol, and by my right hon. friend the then Secretary to the Treasury, now Post-Master-General, and by others who spoke in the same sense, related to matters which were more or less matters of opinion as to the effect of these duties; but these arguments come home to-day, not as matters of opinion, but as matters of actual knowledge and experience. What the late Chancellor of the Exchequer and the then Secretary to the Treasury said as to this tax being largely borne by the producer, and not falling on the consumer at all, has absolutely been borne out by the facts, and nobody who looks into them candidly can possibly say that one brass farthing of these grain duties has fallen on the consumer. There is no doubt that in certain constituencies—the constituency of Bury and many others—there were certain Radical bakers who took the hint and endeavoured to raise the price of bread.

Mr. TOULMIN (Lancashire, Bury): I ask the hon. Member if he will excuse me contradicting that.

Mr. DAVID MACIVER: I have not any doubt whatever that in Bury and in certain other constituencies electioneering organisations did give the bakers the hint to endeavour to raise the price of bread. Anyone who has paid more in price for bread has not done so by reason of the grain duties, but by reason of electioneering tactics on the part of opponents of the Government. I say that without hesitation or qualification. I know it from my business to be true. I have had as much to do with the buying and selling of grain as any Member of this House, and I have had as much to do with the carrying of grain as any Member of this House, and I know what the facts are, and what they have been all through. I know that at this time last year the average price of wheat was 31s. 3d. per quarter before the duty was put on, and that the average price per quarter is now about 27s. 6d. Therefore it is a fact, and I put it forward without the slightest doubt or hesitation, that the price of wheat, notwithstanding the duty, has been actually less than it was before the duty was put on. I say, therefore, there was no legitimate ground whatever for increasing the price of bread, and if it had been increased, it was for the reasons I have stated. What does the existing duty on wheat, and the corresponding duty on flour, amount to? The ordinary freight fluctuations in one day, the differences between one ship and another are sometimes far more than the amount of the duty. If the Government are so unwise as to repeal those grain duties, they will have thrown away £2,500,000, and they will have done it without any benefit whatever to anybody in this country, but perhaps with a certain amount of benefit to our foreign competitors. At the great deputation which waited upon the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Prime Minister said that in fixing the duty on flour at 5d. as the equivalent to the 3d. on corn they gave the turn of the screw in the direction of benefiting the British miller. I wish to put it emphatically to the House that this turn of the screw represented by the ½d. difference between 4½d. and 5d. a cwt., simple though it was, has been enough in Liverpool to give new life to the milling industry. Simple and trifling as that turn of the screw was, it was in favour of the British miller, and it has helped us in Liverpool, at all events, to do a better business than we had done before.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer told us that his choice was as between tea and grain, and that, although tea had some attractions, on the whole he preferred the remission of the duty on grain. May I be allowed to point out to the House how the remission of the tea duty would affect the working men as compared with the grain duty? If the grain duties are withdrawn nobody in this country will be in any way the gainer, but if an equivalent in money be taken off the duty on tea, it will be a real advantage to every cottager in this country of a very large percentage of the sum he pays on tea. If we reduce the duty on tea by 3d. a pound, which is about the equivalent to the grain duties, it will be 3d. in the pockets of the working men, and will be a real benefit to their families. A friend of mine in Liverpool who employs a great many men, has been at the pains to take out the particulars of the expenditure of sixteen working men's families; and the result shows that, for every shilling spent on bread, something like 6d. is spent on tea. I hope I have temperately, but very sincerely, very earnestly, endeavoured to impress my view on the House that the withdrawal of the grain and flour duties is a mistake. They benefit least of all the Government. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has a certain amount of influence. His position appears to me to be very much like that held by Charles II. Nobody wished to kill Charles II. in order to make his probable successor king. Nobody on this side of the House, whatever we may think of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, wishes him to cease to exist in office for the purpose of putting our friends opposite in power. However much we may disapprove of the action of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, after all, one is obliged to look at his possible successor. Some of my other friends on the Treasury Bench may be exceedingly unbusinesslike. Probably they are, but, at all events, there are some business men amongst them; but if you look opposite and see the kind of people which would replace them there is no business there. If you have a business-like Government of any sort, our friend, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, could remain in office in another sphere. He might even be appointed Governor of the Isle of Man or of some colony. To come back to serious considerations, I think that if this Government can only retain office by the unwilling votes of their friends or by the support of hon. Members opposite it must be that the end is not very far off. Loyal as I am to the Government I do not wish to see them remain in office under conditions which do not appear to me to be plain and straightforward. If they are going to go out of office it is much better that they should do so voluntarily. Nobody disputes my loyalty to the Party, and I regret extremely that I am obliged to speak in the terms I do; but I do wish to recall a wise saying of an old friend, "The next best thing to not making a mistake is to get well out of it." The Chancellor of the Exchequer has made a dreadful mistake, a great blunder in withdrawing these duties. If the Government are personally loyal to him it says much for their personal kindness to him. I wish the Chancellor of the Exchequer better occupation elsewhere. I think if the Government really desire to retain the confidence of their friends in the House and out of it, of the larger tribunal of the country, they will have to do their best to retrace their steps in this most unfortunate affair. I beg to second the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'that,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'this House considers that the financial policy of His Majesty's Government, in the remission of indirect taxation imposed only last year for purposes of a permanent character, involves a needless and injurious disturbance of trade and a serious loss to the Revenue, without substantial relief to the consumer; and that, if any remission of indirect taxation is considered necessary by His Majesty's Government, such remission ought to be made by a reduction of the Duties proposed to be levied on tea or other articles of general consumption.'"—(*Mr. Chaplin.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Mr. Speaker, if, as the author of the tax the repeal of which is the principal feature of the Budget of the year, I ask leave to intervene thus early in the discusson of the Amendment, it is because my right hon. friend the Member for Sleaford has, as it were, appealed to me against the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, to whom I am only anxious to give such humble support as may be in my power consistently with my own opinions, and because I think my right hon. friend and the seconder of this Amendment take a view of the whole present fiscal and political situation with which I am unable to agree. Sir, what is the history of this small duty on grain and on flour? When I proposed it, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, to my colleagues in the Cabinet of last year, the South African war was still at a stage of which no one could foresee the end. I proposed it, as it was necessary, in my opinion, to raise more money for the purposes of that war by indirect taxation, and because I believed that in this revival of this duty I had a source of revenue which would yield largely to the Exchequer while doing the minimum of injury possible to the trade, commerce and industry of this country. When I brought it before my colleagues in the Cabinet it was my duty to state to them that I foresaw the objections with which it would be assailed. I knew that it would be challenged as a violation in theory, though I believe not in practice, of the principles of free trade. I was well aware of the use that would be made of it in reviving the cry of the big loaf and the little loaf in Parliamentary elections. But, after careful consideration of the objections to this proposal, my colleagues in the Cabinet cordially accepted what I suggested. And when the war ended in South Africa, as we had to reconsider the finance of the year, of course, as was my duty, I placed the matter before them, not merely as a tax necessary for the war, but as a permanent addition to our sources of revenue. They unanimously accepted the proposal which I made to them to persist in the tax. I proposed it, and my colleagues accepted it, as a purely fiscal measure, which, in the enormous annual growth of the ordinary expenditure of the country, I believed and they believed to be a necessary addition to our sources of indirect taxation. Very well. What has been the result? Has the tax failed as a fiscal measure or has it succeeded? No, Sir, it has not failed. It has produced to the revenue more than I ever anticipated. It has not checked that great import of corn and flour from abroad upon which this country depends for its existence. There never was, I believe, a larger import of wheat and wheat flour taken together in any one year than there was in the year which has just closed. Has it protected the British corn growing farmer? In the discussions on the tax, I and my right hon. friend the First Lord of the Treasury had to rebut suggestions that it would do so. It has not done so in the least degree—for the simple reason which last year I stated to the House, that foreign wheat and British wheat are, unfortunately for us, two different things in their value and in their price; and this was singularly exemplified by the bad harvest of last year, the result of which has been that foreign wheat has necessarily commanded a somewhat larger price than before, quite irrespective of the duty, while British wheat has fetched a very low price indeed. Has the tax increased the price of bread? If it had increased the price of bread one thing is certain, that a rise in the price of bread would have been, I might say, universal, or at any rate very general. All that has happened is that in some places the bakers took advantage of the tax to do what they had been long meditating for other reasons—namely, to increase the price of the loaf for a temporary period—while in other places there was no rise at all. And, finally, I venture to say that when this tax is repealed, as, of course, after the proposals of the Government, repealed it will be, whether the producers of corn or flour abroad may profit, or whether the steamship companies and the railway companies who bring us that corn or flour may profit, or whether our dealers, millers, or bakers may profit, there is one person who will not profit at all by the repeal of the tax, and that is the consumer of bread. Therefore, Sir, when I first heard of the proposal of my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to repeal this duty, I confess I heard it with surprise and regret.

So far I am in agreement with my right hon. friend the Member for Sleaford. But now I am afraid I must part company with him, for there is another side to the question which I think he has somewhat failed to see. Why did I propose to the House last year that this tax ought to be a permanent addition to our sources of indirect taxation? For this reason—because of the enormous annual growth of our expenditure. I had protested as Chancellor of the Exchequer for years against that growth. I had protested to my colleagues, I had protested to this House; and I had endeavoured to show to the country what I thought were the great dangers to our finances of that growth, because it must never be forgotten that that growth has been far in excess of the automatic growth of our revenue. Well, Sir, my protests and my sermons were received with indifference. Had they met with more sympathy I might not now be addressing the House from this place. But I am thankful to think that there has been a turn in the tide. My right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been able to make a reduction in the taxation of the country this year, on which I sincerely congratulate him. But what is left? Surely it must have come almost with surprise to many persons in this country to find that, nine months after the conclusion of the costly war in South Africa, all my right hon. friend could do in the reduction of taxation has been done in the Budget now before the House, and that in peace time we have still to retain the additional taxes on spirits, on beer, on tea, and on tobacco, and the new taxes on sugar and on coal, all of which were imposed as taxation for the purposes of the war. Surely, Sir, it is even a graver thing that in peace time the Income Tax should stand at the unprecedented figure of 11d. in the pound. I think that these things have deeply impressed the country and have not been without their power of impression on this House.

I have been glad to see that there has been in this House, in the course of this session while I was absent, a very strong evidence of a desire not only on the other side of the House, but on this side also, to reduce that part of the expenditure in which, to my mind, our money is worst spent—namely, our Army expenditure; and I was still more glad to find in the Budget speech of my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer a promise of considerable reduction in the Army expenditure in the course of the next year or two. But I hope the attention of my right hon. friend will be directed to checking the increase of expenditure in other directions also. I will venture to add that I hope that this may be a subject of consideration not to my right hon. friend alone. It is impossible for any Chancellor of the Exchequer, whatever his ability, whatever his desire for economy, really to check the expenditure of this country unless he has the active, the firm, and the continuous support of the Prime Minister of the day. Now I appeal to my right hon. friend the Prime Minister. The Estimates for this year have shown an increase which is not justified by anything within my knowledge. But my right hon. friend, as we all know, was occupied with a most laborious legislative task in the latter part of last year. I appeal to my right hon. friend to look into this matter of the increase of the annual normal expenditure of the country for himself this autumn. I trust that, even before this debate has closed, my right hon. friend may be able to tell us that he has already done so, and that he is able to say that in his opinion the great growth in the annual expenditure which has taken place within the last few years can be stopped, and that he is determined to stop it. If he is able to make any reassuring statement of that kind, my great reason for insisting last year that this tax ought to be a permanent tax will to a large extent have disappeared.

But there is another consideration, and quite as important a consideration, which influences me in dealing with this matter. My right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave as, I think, his principal reason for proposing the repeal of this tax that it lent itself very readily to misrepresentation. I think that that expression has in some measure been misinterpreted. I do not believe, I cannot believe, that my right hon. friend and his colleagues have proposed to repeal this tax on account of the reports of their wirepullers as to its temporary unpopularity in certain by elections. Why, Sir, is it not clear that no Government could gain popularity by such a course as that. What people like in a Government is consistency. We knew perfectly well last year that this tax might cause a temporary unpopularity in the constituencies. Yet, in the interest of sound finance—necessary for the maintenance of the equilibrium of revenue and expenditure—we determined to run the risk of that unpopularity. Sir, I will venture to say that no Government which is afraid to face temporary unpopularity in the interests of sound finance deserves to sit upon that bench. But why should this unpopularity have been more than temporary? Why, as my right hon. friend the Member for Sleaford has already said, in which I entirely agree with him, unpopularity may have come from a temporary rise in the price of bread from whatever cause. But as the months and years went by it is perfectly certain that when the people found that there was not that difference between the big loaf and the little loaf which they had been taught to expect, this tax would have been in the end no more unpopular in constituencies than the sugar tax or the coal duty, and therefore I cannot for a moment believe that this was the controlling reason in the mind of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his colleagues when they made up their minds to repeal this duty. I think the word "misrepresentation," used by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was a mistake. I think what he really meant was "misapprehension." That is to my mind a much more serious and a very different affair. Sir, I cannot impress upon the House too strongly that I proposed this tax last year on behalf of the Government as a fiscal measure, and not as a protective measure. I defended it over and over again as a measure of that kind, and of that kind only. Well, but what has happened since the introduction of the Budget? My right hon. friend the Member for Sleaford introduced a very important deputation to the Prime Minister. What were the arguments that were used by that deputation? I am afraid it was perfectly clear to anybody considering opinions that sometimes were expressed rather by cheers than by reasoned arguments, that protection was in the mind not of course of my right hon. friend, but of a good many of his supporters. Now, what about the millers? The millers said in so many words that the duty on flour had encouraged them to increase their milling plant, and that, therefore, it was a great hardship to them that the duty should be repealed. Well, I know what the millers said to me. They said that if I put the duty on flour at 4½d. instead of 5d. I should be giving a direct advantage to the foreign miller as against them. I was convinced by their argument and I proposed and carried through the House a duty of 5d. on flour as compared with 3d. on corn, in order to put the British and Irish miller on the same footing as the foreign miller and not to give him protection at all. I am afraid that I made a little mistake, if the millers' argument on the deputation the other day was correct, and that if my right hon. friend had not decided to repeal the corn duty, in order to keep things even he ought to have reduced the duty on flour to 4½d. There is a more important matter than that. What about the farmers? The farmers to my mind have had no protection as against the foreign grower of corn at all. [Hear, hear.] I am glad to find that statement confirmed, but I am afraid the farmers did not look upon this duty solely as a source of revenue to the country, and that, judging from the enthusiasm with which the Chambers of Agriculture supported my right hon. friend, they look upon it not as protective, but as containing within itself that most dangerous thing in politics, a germ; and that they thought it heralded a return to protection for themselves against foreign corn. And there is even a more important misapprehension. In some quarters it seems to be supposed that this corn duty might be and ought to be used for the purpose of colonial preference. [OPPOSITION cheers.] Now Sir, if the decision of His Majesty's Government to repeal this duty on grain and flour was arrived at with the desire to put an end altogether to misapprehensions of this kind, then Sir, all I can say is that little as I like the repeal of the duty from a purely fiscal point of view, I should say that they have grave reasons in support of their proposal.

But a good deal has happened since the decision of His Majesty's Government to repeal this duty and the introduction of the Budget. I agree with my right hon. friend the Colonial Secretary in the view which he took that too much importance ought not to be attached to a certain speech which he made at Birmingham. He spoke as Colonial Minister on a subject affecting the Department over which he has so ably presided, and he expressed views, to which as he has very fairly said, his mind has been long tending, and which were expressed as his personal opinions. And he did not speak as Prime Minister. He spoke as a Departmental Minister, and I entirely agree with the limitation which my right hon. friend the Prime Minister imposed upon the collective responsibility of the Cabinet, namely, that no Cabinet can be responsible for all the speeches of its individual members. If that were so the life of a Minister would be even more intolerable than it is at the present moment. I have exercised that liberty often enough myself without the slightest injury, I hope, to my colleagues. We must all blow off steam sometimes, and if we can do it before an appreciative and a sympathetic audience the process is extremely agreeable. Therefore, Sir, if it had been a question of the Birmingham speech alone I confess I should have thought that it was not deserving of any special attention. But something more has happened since then. My right hon. friend the Colonial Secretary has felt it necessary to enforce his view in various ways and on several occasions, and a speech has been made (which is much more important) by the Prime Minister himself upon the same subject in the House of Commons. Now, Sir, of course there is no plan before the House, nor before the country as to any change in our future fiscal policy, but two most important principles have been laid down by the Colonial Secretary, namely, that of the use of our tariff for purposes of retaliation, and that of colonial preference. Now, what has my right hon. friend the Prime Minister said in this House? He appeared inclined to view somewhat favourably those proposals, but he said, and I confess I was very glad to see it, that he preserved an open mind upon the subject, that the great question required careful and long study, and that it was not to be decided on this or next year's Budget. Sir, we are precluded by your ruling from entering upon this question with any real argument to-day, but I hope I am not transgressing that ruling if I venture to say that, in my humble opinion, the position suggested by the Prime Minister with regard to this subject is an absolutely impossible position. It is not fair to his own Government. It is not fair to the members of this great Party. The more humble the position of an individual Member of this House, the less experienced he may be in political affairs, the more difficult is his position rendered if this subject is long left as suggested by the Prime Minister. His constituents expect from him, and they are entitled to expect from him, light and leading on this great question—one of the greatest questions that could possibly come before the House, and he himself is entitled to expect light and leading from a united Government. Well, Sir, we have had the opinion of the Colonial Secretary expressed with all that plainness and frankness of which the right hon. Gentleman is so great a master, and expressed, I know, with perfect sincerity. I yield, Sir, to no one in appreciation of the splendid work which my right hon. friend has done in the position he adorns. No Colonial Secretary who ever existed has done so much to unite our great self-governing colonies to the mother country as has my right hon. friend. No Colonial Secretary who ever existed has done so much as he to make the self-governing colonies feel their position and duties as part of a great Empire, and, therefore, if in this matter I am obliged to criticise the views of my right hon. friend he may be quite sure I do it with no unfriendly feeling towards himself. Sir, what is the situation? We have had a declaration, as I have said, of the opinion of my right hon. friend; we have had a statement to the effect I have quoted, by my right hon. friend the Prime Minister. Are we to take the opinion of the Colonial Secretary as the opinion of a united Cabinet or not?

*MR. SPEAKER: I am extremely sorry to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman, but I think he will see that he is now introducing and inviting a general discussion on the merits of the proposals put forward.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: It was very far from my intention, Sir, to trespass on your ruling, and I will endeavour to keep myself strictly within it. All I would say is that the repeal of the corn duty in this Budget appears to me to be, so far as it goes, a direct bar to the adoption of the principles to which I have alluded, and therefore I conclude that the opinion of the Government as a whole with regard to those principles is the same as it was when I was a Member of it. Why, Sir, year after year, as Chancellor of the Exchequer in this House, acting with the full authority of my colleagues, and without a whisper of disagreement from any of them, I opposed colonial preference. I opposed it firstly with regard to wines, though it was pressed upon us by the Australian colonies; secondly with regard to tea, thirdly with regard to sugar, and only last year with regard to corn and flour. Only a few months ago, in January last, the Government ratified the Sugar Convention, binding it not to give preference on sugar to our sugar-growing colonies, though if any preference was to be given anywhere they ought to have had it, and in this Budget now before us, and in this proposal for the repeal of the corn duty, we have, as I have already stated, a distinct bar to the adoption of such a policy. I hope, Sir, I am not transgressing your ruling if I venture to say that I am convinced that though we cannot discuss this matter now it cannot long be left undiscussed, and I would make an earnest appeal to my right hon. friends the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary. I do not enter into the merits of this policy. Let it, if you like, be accepted, though I do not think so myself, as a wise and right policy. Whatever opinion we entertain of it we must all feel that it is a vital change in the fiscal policy which has been accepted by this country for fifty years, and which has been accepted by our Party since 1852. That being so it is a change that ought only to be made with the assent of the general opinion of the United Kingdom. I do not say universal assent, but with the very general assent, for it certainly could only be maintained by that general assent, because the trial of it would come in times of depression rather than in times of prosperity. Now, Sir, do my right hon. friends really think that they have any chance whatever of obtaining such a general assent to this policy? Why, its promulgation has done one thing already almost amounting to a miracle. It has united the Party opposite—divided for the last eight years—into a happy family. It is dividing our Party on this side of the House, and, Sir, I venture to express my deep and conscientious conviction that if persisted in it will destroy the Unionist Party as an instrument for good. Now, Sir, if it be that there is no chance of obtaining that general assent to this policy which is necessary to carry it into effect and to maintain it, might not my right hon. friend the Colonial Secretary— might not the Prime Minister, reconsider the position? Might not they refrain——

MR. CHAPLIN: I rise to order, sir. I wish to call your attention to the fact that I should have endeavoured, and I think should have succeeded, to place a very different complexion on what the right hon. Gentleman is now saying, had I not been bound by your ruling and refrained from endeavouring to proceed in that direction.

*MR. SPEAKER: I did call the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the fact a few minutes ago, and I think now he is transgressing my ruling again, as he is discussing a matter which I understand is not relevant to this Bill. He is discussing the method of policy indicated in the scheme of the Colonial Secretary, and whether that is or is not a policy which ought to be adopted. That is the very thing I say ought not to be touched on.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I was trying to keep myself clear of a discussion of the merits of the question, and merely to appeal to my right hon. friends whether in the circumstances they might not consider that after all the business of statesmen —and they are experienced statesmen— is not to consider what is desirable in their own minds, but what is possible, and whether their own obligations to a great Party, towards which they stand in so prominent a position, may not lead them to consider whether it would not be more consistent with their own honour, and their own greatness, to say they will not proceed in a course which will split up their Party, and which, in my opinion, is wrong. But, Sir, I leave that, and I will only say that I do not believe, for the reasons that I have already given, that this policy commands the united assent of the present Cabinet, and that as the Colonial Secretary has indulged in that liberty which is granted to Ministers of expressing personal opinion, I, for one, shall gladly hear, if there be Ministers who disagree with him, those Ministers speak their minds. For myself, Sir, I can only say in conclusion that, though I sympathise to some extent with the objections of my right hon. friend the Member for Sleaford, to the repeal of the corn duty, yet, for the reasons I have stated, I believe that the policy which has been suggested to us practically as an alternative, is the much greater evil. I am opposed to the principles of the policy of my right hon. friend the Colonial Secretary. I believe they will be deeply injurious to this country, and will do more to disunite than to unite the Empire.

*MR. SPEAKER: I think the right hon. Gentleman is hardly treating the Chair quite fairly. He is now proceeding to discuss the merits of this policy, and inviting other Members to follow him into a discussion which would not be in order.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Well, Sir, I have only to say in conclusion that, having to choose between two evils, I choose that which in my opinion is by far the less, and my support will be given to the Budget of my right hon. friend as against the Amendment of my right hon. friend the Member for Sleaford.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, Chelmsford): Perhaps the House will permit an agricultural Member to say a word on this matter. I have the greatest possible sympathy with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford. I know perfectly well he is an expert, a past master in anything connected with the land, and has a due conception of what the agricultural interests want, and what they desire. I listened with the greatest interest to his speech when he introduced the deputation to the Prime Minister a month ago, and I also listened with attention to the speech which, to some extent, he has repeated this afternoon. I think he is piling the agony rather too high. Of course some of us think we have had rather bad luck in this matter. The registration duty hurt nobody. It was not protective because it protected nobody, and it brought in a large sum to the Treasury. Last year we proved to demonstration that black was white, but now it turns out to be, if anything, rather grey. I have always endeavoured not to put too rosy a colour on agricultural matters in Essex. I have always told the House that we were divided into two parties—those who are ruined and those who are going to be. There is such a thing as "piling the agony" too high, but those of us who go on the markets have been told by the farmers that the registration duty put no money into their pockets, that if anything it raised the price of feeding stuffs—although I hardly agree with that—and that practically it did not do them much good. But they regret its repeal, because they regarded the imposition of the duty as a benevolent view taken of their position by the Government, and they had hopes of better things to come. That, however, is no reason why I, at any rate, should vote against the Party I was sent here to support, particularly when I reflect that the present Administration, during the eight years they have been in office, have done more than the Liberal Party did during fifty years before. The only thing the Party opposite have done during the last thirty years has been to reintroduce foot-and-mouth disease. I, therefore, much as I regret the flexibility and adaptability displayed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, have not the slightest intention of voting with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford and against the Government on the present occasion

SIR HARRY SETON-KARR (St. Helens): We all remember that when the late Chancellor of the Exchequer imposed this corn tax he said it was to be a permanent tax. We have now heard the reasons why he is going to support the repeal of the tax. But I noticed that most of his arguments were really in favour of the Amendment of my right hon. friend the Member for Sleaford, for he has reminded us that it was a tax which injured nobody, was not felt by the community, and was to all intents and purposes a piece of sound finance. He then, however, played on the feelings of misapprehension or misrepresentation, and wound up by saying he would support the Government in repealing the tax. After that, I confess that as a loyal supporter of the right hon. Gentleman when he was in office I do not know where I am at present. I was entirely in favour of the imposition of the duty as a permanent tax. More than once I went down to my constituents and justified its imposition, and I find it very difficult now to turn round, swallow everything I then said, and support the Government in its repeal. I may say in passing that I am also strongly in favour of the policy of preferential tariffs indicated by the Colonial Secretary, and I am prepared to go to my constituents to-morrow and justify my opposition to the repeal of the corn tax. The question of who pays the tax has been alluded to. In a letter from the Colonial Secretary, published yesterday, there are these words—

> "It is, I think, established that the 1s. duty recently imposed was met by a reduction of prices and of freights in the United States of America, and that the tax did not, therefore, fall in any way on the consumer here."

I do not wish to go behind that authority. It was a contribution of £2,500,000 to the Imperial Exchequer by the grain importers of the United States, Russia and the Argentine for the privilege of having the freedom of our markets. That is a policy of which I entirely approve. But when I remember all these things, I come back to the state of mind to which supporters of the Government are reduced, viz., a state of absolute bewilderment. We cannot reconcile these various statements. We cannot reconcile what was said by the Colonial Secretary yesterday with what was said by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer to-day, or what was said by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer to-day with what he said a year ago, and I find it difficult to reconcile the repeal of the tax with the policy of preferential tariffs foreshadowed by the Colonial Secretary. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer said the Colonial Secretary was "blowing off steam." I do not think it is fair, when a Minister, holding the high position of Colonial Secretary, makes such an important speech, he should be said to be merely "blowing off steam." I attach reater importance than that to the speech, and I believe that in carrying out the policy therein suggested the right hon. Gentleman will have the support of the men who sent him here. Then the late Chancellor of the Exchequer said the repeal of the corn tax was a direct bar to the policy of the Colonial Secretary.

Sir Harry Seton-Karr.

There is only one direction in which we seem to have any light in regard to the position of the Government on this question. If I thought this tax was repealed in order to clear the ground in order that it might be reimposed at some future date as part of a large scheme of preferential tariffs, I might be able to understand to some extent what the Government meant. One great reason why I supported the imposition of the tax was that I thought it tended to ensure a safer food supply to these islands. The Government have recently appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into that question, but everybody knows that we are bound, whatever may happen in the future with regard to the improvement of the agricultural interest, to import a large proportion of our bread-stuffs from abroad. At present we get them almost entirely from foreign countries. If this tax had been used to give a preference to, say, Canadian corn, we should at once have made a start towards remedying the present dangerous state of affairs. Canada, with a population of 5,000,000, has a wheat area of 4,000,000 acres, from which 125,000,000 bushels of cereals were produced last year. That is, Canada has about one-eighth of the population and double the wheat area of this country. But this country has reached the maximum of its corn-producing capacity, whereas Canada has not approached its maximum. There are at least 150,000,000 acres of virgin soil, from which we could get all the breadstuffs we should ever need. I do not think the tax made the slightest difference to the bread of the working men, but it might have tended in the direction of getting bread-stuffs from one of our own colonies by one of the safest and shortest routes. Here was a magnificent opportunity to start in a small but effective manner the great policy foreshadowed by the Colonial Secretary, but our hopes apparently are being dashed to the ground by the repeal of the tax. That is the light in which the late Chancellor of the Exchequer asks us to look at it, but I regard the matter in an entirely different way. I wish to be sanguine in my loyalty to the Government, and I hope we shall hear something from the Prime Minister or the Colonial Secretary to the effect that the repeal of the tax does not mean that it will not some day be reimposed in a preferential way with regard to the colonies. If, on constitutional grounds, they have thought it right to repeal the tax in order that it may be subsequently reimposed in the manner I have suggested, I shall feel more light hearted than I do at present with respect to the policy of the Government. I am quite prepared to go to my constituents at any time and support the continuance or the reimpostion of this tax. I do not think the misapprehension, to which reference has been made, prevails. The working men know perfectly well the value of the "big loaf and the small loaf" cry. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division has spoken from the point of view of an agricultural constituency; I speak as the representative of an industrial constituency, and I believe the working men can accurately judge the value of these electioneering cries. I want to make the foreign importer pay a very much larger contribution, for they have the run of our market without paying for it, and I should like to see them pay a little more. I believe the working man is perfectly well able to look after himself and to understand the value of any mere electioneering cry. With regard to the preferential tariffs policy I am afraid I should be out of order in discussing it, but some of us do look upon this matter as one of national importance and we consider ourselves entitled to a little more information. We want to be able to reconcile the statements made by right hon. Gentlemen, and I hope that my suggestion that this tax is being repealed to clear the ground for some fresh system of financial reform is a sound one.

*MR. RITCHIE: Sir, on whatever points the House may differ, I am sure there will be complete agreement on the point that one effect of the Motion of my right hon. friend the Member for Sleaford has been to elicit from my right hon. friend the late Chancellor of the Exchequer a most interesting and instructive speech on the question which the House is now considering. It is natural, and not by any means unexpected, that my right hon. friend, who was responsible mainly for the imposition of the tax now under discussion, should regret that his successor should have proposed to remit a tax, which was not an easy tax to impose and which, when he put it on, he defended with, I think, sound and conclusive arguments. My right hon. friend has told the House that he proposed this tax mainly with two objects. First, to meet the growth of expenditure which, he rightly stated, was considerably greater than the normal growth of revenue; and, secondly, for the purposes of the war. Well, Sir, he has dealt, as we might have expected, not at any great length but very forcibly, with the very considerable growth in expenditure, both in regard to the Army and the other national services; and I can assure my right hon. friend that he has got no warmer sympathiser in his desire for economy than his successor in the very onerous and difficult post which he so long held with such credit to himself and with such advantage to the country. I can assure him that he need be under no apprehension upon this point, and my colleagues and I are devoting our attention to the great expenditure on the Army, the Navy, and the other services, and that we are determined, so far as the interests of the country will allow us, to see whether or not that expenditure might not with advantage be reduced.

But my right hon. friend will be the first to acknowledge that, after a great war, expenditure cannot suddenly be reduced to a normal peace level. It would, indeed, I think, be a great mistake to attempt to deal with it in such a way. But it is our duty to see that, as quickly as we can, we should endeavour to reduce the expenditure which remains in connection with the war to something like what the House would be prepared to consider the proper normal expenditure upon our Army and Navy. There is much of our increased expenditure that we cannot control. It is automatic. But, so far as the expenditure which we can control is concerned, I can assure my right hon. friend that we shall be very glad if it is in our power to reduce it. My right hon. friend has also stated that one of the reasons—of course it was obvious to everybody—why he asked the House to impose this tax upon corn was for the purposes of the war. He felt it his duty to put an additional penny on the Income Tax, and I think he rightly balanced that proposal by the imposition of an additional burden upon indirect taxation. But I am sure my right hon. friend will remember that, after he had stated to the House what his proposals were in connection with the war, a condition of peace happily arrived, and that it was a matter of grave consideration by himself whether or not the taxation which he proposed in his Budget should, when peace came, be removed and not persisted in. He and his colleagues, on his suggestion, considered carefully this proposal; and he arrived, and I think rightly arrived, at the conclusion that, having regard to the obligations to which we were committed, it would be unwise to remit any portion of the additional taxation which he had proposed. And so the taxation which he then put on, both direct and indirect, was continued. I am aware that my right hon. friend did emphatically say that he hoped this tax might remain a permanent one, and that it might be the means of broadening the area of taxation.

My right hon. friend the Member for Sleaford, when he was alluding to what my right hon. friend the late Chancellor of the Exchequer said, enlarged upon the great difficulties which undoubtedly would follow the imposition of an indirect tax for a year only. My right hon. friend was surprised when I cheered that statement. But it is perfectly obvious that, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer was challenged to say whether this tax was to continue only for a year, it was his duty absolutely to come under no undertaking of that kind. It would have dislocated trade, it would have failed to bring in the revenue which he anticipated; and so he rightly altogether refused, as any Chancellor of the Exchequer would have refused, to assent to the proposition that the tax should be put on only for twelve months. I do not know what my right hon. friend might have done if he had been in my place when the Budget was introduced; but I cannot help thinking that the considerations which were present in my mind and in the minds of my colleagues at that time, would in all probability have led him to the same conclusion that we arrived at, and that, notwithstanding his hope that the tax would be a permanent one, he would have acted very much as I felt it my duty to act. My right hon. friend the late Chancellor of the Exchequer devoted a certain portion of his speech to the question which has been in the mind of the public now for some little time—I mean the question of preferential treatment of the colonies. It would be contrary to the ruling of Mr. Speaker if I were to enter into any detailed argument with regard to this large and important question. It must come up for argument and discussion before the country. [OPPOSITION cries of "When?"] At any rate, we are told it ought not to come up now. It has been ruled out of order to discuss it now. But my right hon. friend has devoted a certain portion of his speech to that matter, and has put certain questions to the Government, and I think, perhaps, although I may not be allowed to enter into the details of the matter, I might be permitted, in one or two sentences, to express my own opinion and the opinion of my colleagues upon this important subject. In this case, and at present, those members of the Government who have spoken have stated clearly that they have spoken only for themselves and not for the Government.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): For whom did the Prime Minister speak ?

*MR. RITCHIE: My right hon. friend the Colonial Secretary, upon whose speech, I imagine, the mind of the public is most directly fixed, in, I think, the first of his speeches, expressly stated that he spoke only for himself. Of course, it is impossible for the Government not to express their view of the situation also. So far as members of the Government who have spoken on this matter are concerned, all that has been said has been that the question of the preferential treatment of the colonies should be discussed and inquired into. For my own part, I feel bound to say that I should be surprised if inquiry should show any practical means of carrying out that policy. I avow myself a convinced free trader, and I do not share the views of those who think that any practical means can be devised for overcoming the difficulties which present themselves to me in connexion with their proposals; and, as at present advised, I cannot be a party to a policy which, in my opinion, would be detrimental both to the country and to the colonies.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) rose, but was unable to make himself heard amid loud OPPOSITION cries of "Order, order!"

*MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr. J.W. LOWTHER, Cumberland, Penrith) who for a short time relieved the Speaker in the occupation of the Chair: No question of order has arisen.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: I want to ask a question of my right hon. friend.

*MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member rise to a point of order ?

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: No, sir.

*MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: If the hon. and gallant Member rises to a point of order he is entitled to interrupt the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but if he does not rise to a point of order he is not so entitled and he should wait until the conclusion of the right hon. Gentleman's speech.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: Does he speak for the Government ?

*MR. RITCHIE: I believe that an inquiry will favour the views which I hold. I do not shrink from an investigation of the subject, which, indeed, in common with all my colleagues, I think is eminently desirable from every point of view.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: Does my right hon. friend speak for himself or for the Government ?

*MR. RITCHIE: If my hon. friend had listened carefully to the remarks which I made, he would have found that in some portions of them I was speaking for the Government, and in other portions I was speaking for myself. Perhaps I may now be allowed to come to the Amendment of my right hon. friend. My right hon. friend discussed the matter with an eloquence with which I cannot for a moment attempt to vie. He was not very complimentary to myself or to the Government, but I did not expect that he would be. I was aware that the proposal which we made was one which would not be acceptable to my right hon. friend, and he himself, not, I think, to any extent to-day, but on another occasion on which he has spoken on the matter, gave what he thinks are very good reasons why the policy that we have adopted is a policy which is injurious to the country, and that the policy which he advocates, of the retention of the tax, is in accordance with the highest interests of the country. I differ from my right hon. friend, and I shall proceed to show, perhaps in a somewhat dull and humdrum manner, that most of the assertions which he has made with regard to the advantage to the farmer of the corn tax, and the evils which are likely to follow from its remission, exist only in his own imagination. My right hon. friend, speaking as the mouthpiece of a deputation—no, I think it was subsequently—spoke of the shilling registration duty on corn as being one means that was going to bring thousands back to the land.

MR. CHAPLIN dissented.

*MR. RITCHIE: I beg my right hon. friend's pardon. I think I shall show him that he expressly said the duty was to have the effect of bringing thousands back to the land.

MR. CHAPLIN: May I ask my right hon. friend to quote my words and to state where I used them? All I can say is that I explicitly deny it.

*MR. RITCHIE: If my right hon. friend says he did not use those words, I withdraw the assertion. I must have been reading somebody else's speech. Certainly my right hon. friend has advocated the retention of this tax in the interests of the farmers. Well, now, how is the farmer to benefit?

MR. CHAPLIN: I think my right hon. friend very much misapprehends me. I have always spoken of the tax upon corn as a very trifling matter indeed. What is an advantage, and no doubt has been an advantage, to the farmer is the result from the imposition of the duty on flour.

*MR. RITCHIE: The right hon. Gentleman's argument is that the tax has brought less flour into this country and more grain. My right hon. friend will not deny that one of his arguments is that there has been an increased importation of grain and a decreased importation of flour. At the deputation he laid great stress upon the fact that larger quantities of grain had come in in consequence of the duty on flour, and that less flour had come in; that the milling industry had in consequence greatly profited; and that, in consequence of the milling industry being prosperous, the feeding stuffs used by the farmers were very much cheapened, and so the tax was beneficial to the farmers. One thing, at any rate, is certain—that the farmer has not gained anything in the price which he has obtained for his wheat. It has been asserted that it is the foreigner who has paid this tax, and not the British consumer. How does my hon. friend reconcile that contention with the fact that American wheat, which was 30s. 3d. a quarter before the imposition of the tax, is now 33s. a quarter? That is to say, the British farmer has got no more for his grain, which is just now at about the same price as it was before the tax was imposed, but the American farmer has got nearly 3s. a quarter more for his grain since the tax than he got before. How, therefore, anyone can contend that it is the foreigner who pays the tax I really cannot imagine. It would almost seem that the people who have gained by this tax are not the British farmers, but the foreign farmers, because the price which they have got for their grain has risen by more than the amount of the tax which they have to pay. Now, with regard to flour, it is no doubt true that, taking the calendar year 1902, there has been a falling off in the importation of flour of 3,190,000 cwt. But that is entirely misleading, and must be analysed to see what it really means. In the first place, the calendar year embraces three and a half months in which there was no tax at all; and, secondly, and what is much more important, the calendar year is not the year to judge by at all. It is the harvest year, and the harvest year begins in most of the countries from which we obtain flour at the same time—namely, in September.

If we take the eight months, from September to April, of the harvest year 1902-3 and compare it with the same eight months of 1901-2 we find that there has been no falling off in the import of flour at all; and, if that be so, it cannot be contended that in consequence of the duty wheat has displaced flour. Why should flour be displaced? The foreign exporter of flour has obtained more for his flour, exclusive of duty, than he did before the imposition of the duty—that is to say, exclusive of duty the foreign exporter obtained for his flour on an average in 1901 9·16s., in 1902 9·21s., and in 1903 9·24s. per cwt. So the foreign exporter of flour has really been obtaining a higher price since the imposition of the duty than he did before. Why on earth should it fall off? There is no doubt about the fact that the wheat imports have increased. They have increased 2,205,000 quarters in the eight months of the harvest year, September to April, 1902-3, as compared with the same period in the preceding year. It would, indeed, be a strange thing if the result of a duty was to increase the import of an article on which the duty was put. Notwithstanding the duty, the import increased, and increased considerably, although not more considerably than in some previous years. But why did it increase? As everybody knows, the home harvest, although a very large one, was of bad quality. Owing to the wet a great deal of it was spoilt and had to be used for feeding purposes, and that of itself made a demand for foreign corn. The millers were bound to have their foreign corn, especially for blending purposes. This encouraged the importation; and so practically the millers have had a very good time of it, because they have had more corn to grind. [SIR H. VINCENT: Why not?] Why not! I welcome the fact that it is so, but my ground of difference with my hon. friend is that all this grew from natural causes, and certainly not because the duty was imposed.

Now, my right hon. friend the Member for Sleaford says that the millers of this country have largely added to their plant in consequence of the putting on of this duty. Well, I think they were very rash persons if, because of an imposition of the small duty on corn and flour, which certainly could not be considered as a permanent impost, they largely increased their plant. The truth of the matter is that the millers of this country have for some years past been seeing the great disadvantages under which they suffered as compared with their American competitors because of the old-fashioned system under which they worked; and for some years past there has been a large expenditure of money by millers in order to bring their mills up to the very best position to compete with their American rivals. I am told, from sources on which I can entirely rely, that the great bulk of the mills in this country now are very well equipped, and that they can successfully compete with any of their foreign rivals. But it is not because of any impetus which the duty has given that this expenditure has been made but because the millers have become alive to the fact that their real interest lies in obtaining the best possible machinery. My right hon. friend says that because of the increased import of grain, which I contend is due entirely to natural causes, millers have had more to grind, and therefore there has been more and cheaper offals for the farmer to buy. Let us examine for a moment the proposition that feeding stuffs have been cheapened. It is true that the home supply of offals last year is estimated to have increased by 5,000,000 cwt.; but let us see what proportion that bears to the total of feeding stuffs, both home produced and imported. The home supply of feeding stuffs amounted last year to 238,000,000 cwt. (putting roots and pay in terms of equivalent feeding value), and the imported to 83,900,000 cwt., or together 322,600,000 cwt.; and yet an increase of 5,000,000 cwt. of offals is supposed to have greatly reduced the price of 322,600,000 cwt. of feeding stuffs! The proposition has only to be stated to show how little foundation there is for any such contention. The price has fallen from entirely natural causes; and that is where my right hon. friend and those who support him have got somewhat mixed. And not only has the price of feeding stuffs fallen from natural causes, but there is no winter, I am told—I speak with great deference in presence of my agricultural friends—in recent times in which farmers have been less dependent upon the purchase of feeding stuffs. All corn crops have been exceptionally large, both in grain and straw, and hay and roots were never more plentiful. It is true there has been a fall also in oil cakes; but there, again, the fall has been because of a large speculative trade, causing great quantities to be thrown on the market. May I say also that, as far as feeding stuffs are concerned, it seems to be forgotten that there is nearly £600,000 a year levied upon imported feeding stuffs. Surely if this tax is taken off, that is an advantage to the farmer. He will get foreign feeding stuffs free of duty, and so save £600,000 a year, which he is now compelled to pay. In addition to that, there is no less than 2,000,000 cwt. of offals exported by our millers, largely to our competitors in Denmark and Sweden. And why? Because there is a drawback of 2s. 6d. a ton upon it, which is really almost like a bounty to Danish and Swedish farmers, and places them at an advantage as compared with our own farmers. I am not therefore surprised, under all these circumstances, to receive the following Resolution from the Bolton Dairy Farmers' Association—

> "This meeting, representing the dairy farmers of Bolton, cordially approve the action of the Government in withdrawing the tax imposed on corn last year, as they regard it as a most unjust and inequitable tax on the dairy farmers of this country, compelling them to contribute a most unwarrantable proportion of the increased taxation required by the nation."

MR. CHAPLIN: That is only one out of many hundreds.

*MR. RITCHIE: That may be true, but it shows what an intelligent body of farmers there are in the Bolton district.

There is one statement I desire to make, which I think will be satisfactory to those who are interested in feeding stuffs and dairy farming. The House is perhaps aware that a duty is levied upon molasses imported into this country. I am told that in no other country is there a duty levied upon molasses used for feeding stuffs. The duty we derive from the importation of low-grade molasses is not very large, and I propose to take off the duty upon molasse containing not more than 50 per cent. of sweetening matter. Although the import of it now is very small, yielding about £30,000 to the Exchequer, that does not by any means represent the quantities that are likely to come if there is no tax on it at all; and therefore I think it will be a real gain to dairy farmers, and also be satisfactory to the West Indies, if we can encourage the importation of molasses for feeding stuffs in the way I propose.

One word about the consumer. It has been said that this tax has not been felt by the consumer, that, in fact, he does not pay it. Why, then, should we take off a tax which does no harm to anybody? It is a very extraordinary thing that £2,500,000 should be collected for the Revenue without any one feeling it. That is a piece of political economy which I do not understand. But there is one thing I do know—that not only foreign wheat, but still more noticeably, flour has risen, and that to a large extent. Who has borne this tax? Is it the baker? I think in one of his speeches my right hon. friend suggested that it was the baker. Well, the baker is a long-suffering person, and he may be inclined to bear a little burden of this kind for a short time, but I do not think he is likely to bear it long, and that, either in meal or in malt, either in price or quality, he will very soon transfer his burden. My right hon. friend has said that he questions whether the baker raises his price unless there is a variation of 2s. or 3s. in the price of wheat. [An HON. MEMBER: 4s. or 5s.] That may be true for short periods in regard to the natural rise and fall of the market, and putting the one thing against the other, but if there is to be anything like a permanent rise it is essential that he should make an alteration in price; and I maintain, therefore, that a permanent addition of 1s., which is a totally different thing from the natural rise and fall of the market, is a matter which he would have to consider. The price of bread in certain quarters has undoubtedly risen, and in some quarters has risen by far more than the amount of the tax. In other quarters it has not risen in price, but I very much question whether it has not deteriorated in quality. Moreover, I am thankful to say that home baking is not an extinct art in this country. I am told that in many parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire and in other districts home baking exists to a very large extent, both among the agricultural labourers and the mining population, and certainly it cannot be alleged that the price of flour having undoubtedly risen they pay nothing more on account of the duty. So in regard to the great industrial co-operative associations which exist throughout the country, and the number of whose members are to be counted not by thousands, or hundreds of thousands, but by millions. No doubt they must have borne the tax which has been imposed on flour, and not only on flour, but on oatmeal, rice, and all other commodities of that kind. But what appeals to me more than anything else is this fact: that if there is any increase in the price of bread at all it is on the poorest of the community that the tax falls most heavily, because they consume in proportion to their means a larger amount of bread than any other portion of the community. The tax has been borne uncomplainingly, because I believe that the working classes were in favour of the war, and were prepared to assist in carrying it through and in finding the money for it. In my opinion, it was a tax properly imposed at a time of great national emergency, and as properly removed, now that brighter prospects are in view. If this tax was not to remain a permanent tax on the tariff, I contend that the sooner it was taken off the better; and although I acknowledge that we are quite open to the reflection made against us of placing on the tax one year and taking it off the next, yet I maintain there was no inconsistency. It was imposed mainly for the war. [HON. MEMBERS: "No, no."] Do hon. Members maintain that the tax was not put on for the war I can assure them that it would not have been put on had it not been for the war, and it was properly put on mainly for the war.

MR. VICARY GIBBS (Hertfordshire, St. Albans): After peace had been proclaimed.

*MR. RITCHIE: Yes, because there was a large amount of expenditure to be met, and when we took off a large amount of direct taxation we were bound to take off indirect taxation as well. [Mr. CHAPLIN: Tea.] What are the facts about tea? My right hon. friend says that this remission of taxation will not reach the consumer. When the right hon. Gentleman came with the deputation which waited upon the Prime Minister, he drew a moving picture of the poor old woman paying 2d. duty on her tea, urging that she would be benefited if it were taken off. But the wholesale price of tea is now only a halfpenny a pound more than it was before the tax was put on; and we have received numerous representations from the tea-growers saying that they were the persons who were bearing the additional tax and not the consumers. In making this proposal to remit the corn tax I believe it is one which will be generally accepted throughout the country, and I greatly regret that, in taking this step, we have offended the susceptibilities of many of our friends who usually work with us. But I am satisfied that in the long run, and after reflection, they will come to the conclusion to which the Government have come, that, if they were able to remit any indirect taxation at all, and had only a limited amount to remit, they could have taken no course more acceptable to the people than the repeal of this corn tax.

*SIR HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I do not think that the oldest member of this House has ever listened to a more interesting or more remarkable debate than that which engages our attention this afternoon. We have had the Cabinet veil uplifted, and uplifted without even the previous etiquette of members of the Cabinet informing the House that they had His Majesty's permission to make these revelations. But they have made them frankly and honestly, and we must make the best of those revelations and not ask for more revelations just now. Let us look at the information we have obtained. We have ascertained from two Chancellors of the Exchequer very much how the finances of the country under the present Administration are managed. I say the present Administration because I allege that such a state of things as has been revealed this afternoon would have been as absolutely impossible under the rule of Mr. Gladstone as to contend that two and two make ten. We are told that this tax was put on unanimously last year, and the Minister who put it on informs us that his colleagues unanimously agreed to put it on for definite, distinct, and specific reasons—partly for the purposes of the war, no doubt, but mainly to broaden the existing system of taxation. It was to form a part of the permanent revenue of the country to meet the growing expenditure. Then we were told that when the war came to an end and it was necessary to reconstruct the Budget, the Cabinet again unanimously approved its continuance on the express ground that it was to form part of the permanent revenue of the country. We do not know what happened after that. There is a long hiatus between the time when the late Chancellor of the Exchequer retired from office and the accession to office of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. On that I will say a word or two directly. We have also had a little information given to us with reference to the financial proceedings of the Cabinet as far as expenditure is concerned. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer has told us that for years before the war, during the war, and after peace was declared, he protested against the growth of expenditure to his colleagues, and that these protests were received with indifference; and he specially called attention to the absence of what he calls "the active, firm, and continuous support of the Prime Minister." A more serious charge has seldom been made in the House of Commons against a Prime Minister. I am sorry that the right hon. Gentleman is not here at the moment, but I submit to him that it was his duty, not only to his colleagues but to the country, to have tendered his resignation. The right hon. Gentleman was the responsible guardian of the national finances. He was the responsible trustee alike for revenue and expenditure; and if he was of opinion that too much money was being spent in various large Departments of public expenditure, and especially in two Departments, I suggest to him that, as it seems to me, it was his duty to have placed his resignation in the hands of the Prime Minister. The right hon. Gentleman did eventually tender his resignation; but it was never stated in the House that he had retired from office owing to dissatisfaction with and disapproval of the policy of the Government.

I think that the lesson we have to draw, if the Prime Minister will allow me to impress it upon him, is that this Government—I am not alluding to the tenure of office of the present Prime Minister—has, to an extent of which no preceding Government offers an example, weakened the undivided responsibility of the Cabinet. Individual Ministers have had a power which belonged to the Cabinet as a whole, and in dealing with the various stages which this long controversy will go through we cannot recognise the doctrine that Ministers are at liberty to speak for themselves and not for their colleagues. The responsibility of the Cabinet for the policy of the Government is one and indivisible. That is the constitutional position which we cannot afford to see weakened or tampered with. A Cabinet Minister is not at liberty on great questions of public policy to pronounce his own individual opinions. The country believes them to be the opinions of his colleagues, and although the late Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the Cabinet was not understood to be responsible for all the speeches of all its members, the Cabinet is responsible for all the actions of its members. A disapproving Minister has one remedy in his hands, and that is the remedy which the country expects him to use when his views are irreconcilably different from the views of his colleagues. At the time when the right hon. Gentleman left office there was no doubt that the policy of the Government was to continue the corn tax. They had then no idea whatever of repealing that tax in their next Budget. But after the imposition of the corn tax of this year there were twelve by-elections, and in every one of those elections this tax formed a very prominent subject of discussion. We were challenged last year, when we objected to the imposition of this tax, that the country did not share our opinion. We thought that time would show that it did; but I am bound to say I did not think that the truth would be so clearly shown within twelve months. What was the result of these twelve by-elections? I am no great believer in by-elections; but when you have twelve elections, coming altogether, expressing practically the same view on one question, it is impossible not to be struck by the circumstance. In 1885 there was in those twelve constituencies a Conservative majority of 461. In 1900 that majority had risen to upwards of 20,000 votes in favour of the present Government. What has been the result of elections in those constituencies since the corn duty was imposed? The Conservative majority of 20,000 has been turned into a Liberal majority of 3,496.

I am not going to endeavour to weaken the explanation the late Chancellor of the Exchequer gave us as to the difference between misrepresentation and misapprehension, or to suggest that the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to have used one word when he used the other. I will read to the House an independent opinion, favourable to the Government, and which cannot in the slightest degree be tainted with any connection with this side of the House. What does *The Times* say, which has been the friend of the Government throughout? Last month *The Times* said—

> "It is perfectly understood by everybody that this sudden abandonment of a policy to which the whole Party stands committed is nothing but an electioneering measure resorted to in a moment of alarm at failures, easily accounted for in other ways, of the Party election managers."

In the opinion of *The Times* that accounts for the change in the policy of His Majesty's Government in reference to this tax. We are now brought face to face with the Amendment of the right hon. Member for Sleaford on its merits. Stripped of phraseology, it amounts to a distinct censure upon the Government for proposing to repeal the tax upon corn, and to an expression of preference for a remission of the tax upon tea. And on that Amendment we must decide. I am in favour of the repeal of the corn tax. I should be in favour of it if none of these extraordinary events had happened. We opposed the imposition of the tax twelve months ago on the very same grounds that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has to-day defended its repeal. We urged last year that it was a tax upon a prime necessity of life; and quoted Mr. Gladstone's phrase about it being a tax on the prime necessity of life. I said that it was a tax upon the poorest of the poor, and the meanest tax ever imposed by the House of Commons. The Chancellor of the Exchequer today has endorsed the opinion that it is a tax upon the poorest of the poor; and he has blown to the winds the theory that you can get £2,500,000 from nowhere—paid by some angel's visit to the Treasury. He has shown that every shilling of it has been paid by the consumer.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: No.

*SIR HENRY FOWLER: I know, of course, it would be impossible for me to convince my hon. and gallant friend on a subject of this kind. I object to this tax not only on the grounds we urged so strongly last year, arguments which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has endorsed this afternoon, but also on the ground that it is a violation of the principles of free trade; and in this conflict do not let us labour under the impression that there are two kinds of free trade and two kinds of protection, any more than there are two kinds of peace or two kinds of war. Do not let us think that there is "a sort of free trade." We have been challenged to define what free trade is, and we have been told that Mr. Cobden defined it as—

> "The free interchange of commodities at their natural price."

If that was one of Mr. Cobden's definitions it was rather incomplete; but a shilling duty imposed upon one class of commodities and not upon another would be an interference with the natural price. But Mr. Cobden did not leave us with those uncertain words. He said—

> "By free trade we mean the abolition of all protective duties."

I have another definition of a great authority which covers the whole question—

> "Free trade is that system of commercial policy which draws no distinction between domestic and foreign commodities, and therefore neither imposes additional burdens on the latter nor grants any special favours to the former."

The whole system of free trade is based upon that. When this Bill is carried we shall go back to the state of things where there is no protective duty in the tariff of Great Britain. As long as any corn duty existed you had a protective duty. If you had put an equivalent Excise duty on the British farmer—an absolutely impracticable thing—then you would have had no protection; but as long as you put a duty on wheat coming into the country and none upon the wheat produced within the country you have protection; and if you ring the changes on that all round, you at once reach the definition of Mr. Cobden—that free trade is the abolition of all protective duties. On that ground, Mr. Speaker, I object to this tax. But who pays this tax? The Chancellor of the Exchequer told us that it was paid by the consumer. We had all these various statements as to the different prices going up here and going down there, all of which, with one exception, the right hon. Gentleman accounted for; but he was quite right with regard to one consequence of the corn duty, that deterioration of quality is the way in which the question has been settled with the bread of the poorest people. But suppose you could prove that bread was no dearer in consequence of the duty. Then you must have deprived the consumer of the advantage of the fall in price which has been sufficient to cover the amount of the tax. The Colonial Secretary has said that the corn duty was met by a reduction of freights in the United States, and that not one shilling of the duty was paid by the consumers. Will he give us the figures? At present they are not in existence. I maintain that the duty has been paid by the consumer and can be paid by no one else.

We now come to the position of the Government. We cannot shut our eyes to what has passed. Events have occurred in this country affecting the position not only of all Parties but the position of our whole legislation; and it is under the shadow of that situation that we approach the discussion of this question. Of the position of the Government to-day we may say what Lord Macaulay said of that of a previous Conservative Government which fifty years ago was playing with the question of free trade and protection and upholding in certain quarters one view and in other quarters another view. Macaulay described that Government's position in one sentence—

> "They have contradicted each other and they have contradicted themselves."

As to the fiscal policy of this country, on which almost the commercial existence of this country depends, we do not at this moment know what is the policy of His Majesty's Government. I doubt very much whether they know it themselves. But we are entitled to ask: Is this simply a temporary reduction? Is this tax taken off only to be put on again? When another series of contested elections come round, is there to be another change of policy? The fiscal policy of this country ought to be far above any Party controversy. It involves far deeper and greater interests than those of mere party; and in the interests of all, whether they be importers or exporters, agriculturists or merchants, poor people or rich people, we have a right to know, and to know at once, whether there is a scheme or whether there is not a scheme in the brains of His Majesty's Ministers for revolutionising the whole of our fiscal policy, undoing the work of half a century, wiping out Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Gladstone as great statesmen and wise financiers. We have been told that there is to be an inquiry. By whom? Is this question to be settled by a Royal Commission? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Monmouth—whose absence we all deplore in a debate of this character—when someone made a similar proposition—I think it was in the controversy on the Reform Bill in 1885—said, "What! send the British Constitution to a Select Committee upstairs!" And are we to send our financial policy, which has had the stamp and seal of fifty years prosperity—which has given progress and prosperity to the nation as a whole; which has raised wages and lowered the price of food, and has given to all classes incalculable benefits—are we to throw all these into the melting pot of some imaginary inquiry? No, Sir, the Committee to inquire into the fiscal policy of this country is His Majesty's Ministers, and we have a right to assume they have made up their minds on the subject. This great question of free trade and protection is not a shuttlecock for a game of political battledore. We have a right to expect, on the lines which the late Chancellor of the Exchequer pointed out, that in a great crisis like this, and in grave questions of national policy, popularity or unpopularity is nowhere. A strong Ministry, with a majority of 130 behind them, are certainly strong enough to have a policy, strong enough to declare it, and strong enough to appeal to the country upon it. I welcome such an appeal, for I believe that the people of this country will uphold the material, the moral, and the social results which they have witnessed and with which they are familiar, and I have no fear or doubt of what their verdict will be when the issue is put to them. In the meantime it is trifling with their interests, it is trifling with our colonies, and it is trifling with the great commercial nations of the world, to leave this question unsettled. Retaliation and preferential tariffs will involve this country in difficulties far greater than any of us can foreshadow; difficulties not only with our own colonies, but more serious difficulties elsewhere. If this policy is to be embarked upon we have a right to know, and to know at once, where the Government are and what they intend to do.

MR. MIDDLEMORE (Birmingham, N.): There are certainly one or two points in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman with which I cannot concur He said, for example, that there was only one kind of protection that he knew of. I know of many. I know of a protection that is prohibitive and of one that is not prohibitive, and which is even unfelt. As for the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it seems to me that the chief point on which he enlightened the House was that there was a very deep division in the ranks of the Government itself, and that there is an almost irreconcilable hostility amongst them. It is quite clear that the Amendment of the hon. Member for Sleaford has brought very great confusion into the ranks of the Unionist Party. There has been a lack of cohesion before in regard to the Education Bill. It has affected some Liberal Unionists and some Liberal Conservatives, but the proposal to abolish the corn tax has carried absolute dismay amongst the older and more monumental members of that Party. But to whatever school we may belong, the majority of us feel thoroughly aggrieved at the proposal of the Government. I do not think the reason is far to seek. In plain Anglo-Saxon we have all been made fools of, and it is therefore natural that we should feel aggrieved. I do not think any one of us can feel flattered. The Government has shown its appreciation of its stalwart followers, especially the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by offering to us a suit of motley with cap and bells. They have tried to force the hon. Member for Sleaford into that garb. This is our predicament, and men like myself and many others are asked to abandon the financial position we took up not twelve months ago. This will exhibit us in a very absurd and frivolous light, to say the least of it. We have to repudiate the speeches we made to our constituents. I went about preaching the doctrine of the equality of the loaf, and now where am I? The long and short of it is that I cannot eat my own words. They are very indigestible. Finally, we have to capitulate very nearly in our hour of triumph, when the reasonableness of the tax has been proved and when bread is cheaper. As soon as the tax has really justified itself we are asked to abandon it. I do not want to be rude, but I do think that the Government are not confining this suit of motley to their followers. We were told that the tax was to broaden the basis of taxation, that it had nothing to do with the emergency of the war, but that it was to promote the general growth of taxation. We were told also that everybody deplored the growth of taxation, yet nobody could stop it. The tax was accordingly heartily supported by us. We were further told that the tax was not protectionist, that the foreigner would pay; that we should get an enormous income from it, and that no one would feel the burden of it. That has been proved; we have received an enormous revenue from it, and nobody has felt it. It was, in fact, a model tax; it has been paid by the foreigner, and has been unfelt by the consumer, yet, owing to the enormous consumption, it has brought in a revenue of two and a half millions. What better could we wish for?

There were two very important speeches made by the hon. Member for Glasgow. I remember they were so important that I saw members of the Government exchange significant glances and nod to each other as much as to say, "Here is a rare bird for us. We ought to find a perch for him on the Treasury Bench." He spoke almost as a financial genius. I should like to read a sentence or two from those speeches.

> "This tax (on corn) can only add to the selling price of grain in this country if it makes the supply less than it would be if the tax were not imposed."

This is his first proposition, *i.e.* that the price will depend on the supply. Then he adds—

> "Can any one contend that threepence a cwt. will cause land in America or elsewhere to go out of cultivation, or any part of the grain which would ordinarily come to this country to go to other markets which are taxed much more heavily than ours?"

This is his second proposition, *i.e.*, that the supply on which the grain depends will not be affected by this duty, so that the price of grain will not be affected by it. That is clear. He also says—

> "Suppose (which he has shown to be impossible) the supply were affected. Suppose that the whole tax fell on the consumer it will only amount to a quarter of a farthing on a 2 lb. loaf. The hon. Member for South Shields says the baker will charge a halfpenny. But this means an additional profit on what they are already making of fully 20 per cent. If that were possible we should all turn bakers."

This is his third proposition, *i.e.*, that if the supply were affected (which it cannot be) to the extent of a quarter of a farthing on a 2 lb. loaf, still it would not be felt by the consumer. What more do we want? Well, I think that is lucid and convincing, and I think that it is destructive. It seems to me that we are practically proposing to remit this tax, and are giving the working classes nothing in exchange. Who is to benefit by this? The working man will not benefit, because the loaf is dearer than ever. The working men are getting accustomed not to the tax, but to the idea of the tax. They know it was approved by such great financiers as Cobden, Bright, and Gladstone, and they have perceived that the loaf is no smaller in consequence of it. The working classes already have cheap bread, and it is not possible, I think, to cheapen it more. If we want to do the working classes a good turn we ought to cheapen something which is susceptible of being cheapened—such as tea. The Unionist Party has had all the discredit of imposing this tax. False criticism had done its worst, and we shall have no credit for taking the tax off. And upon my honour I do not think we deserve it. No doubt it will be said we have taken it off from Party motives. For myself I want to see the people back again on the land. We have heard from the highest possible sources that the physique of our race is degenerating. This question to my mind is of far greater importance than the maintenance of any of our institutions—the aristocracy, or squirearchy, or industrialism, or even Royalty itself. It is a question of the maintenance of our race. If we read the Report of the Inspector-General of Recruiting we must come to the conclusion that the national life of England, of which Parliament is the custodian, is at stake. I do not believe that the imposition of this tax would drive a single acre of land in America out of cultivation, or that its remission would drive a single acre in England out of cultivation, but the debate may have the helpful and satisfactory result of calling attention to the fact that the people are being driven from the land, and it is only by getting them on the land again that the national life can be restored.

*SIR JOSEPH LEESE (Lancashire, Accrington): I should like to say a word in regard to the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford, and the reasons he has given for its adoption. He condemns the Government on two grounds for having remitted the corn tax: one is the alleged serious loss of revenue, and the other is that the remission gives no substantial relief to the consumer. In regard to the alleged serious loss of revenue I would call attention to a statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget speech, viz.—

> "I have still £2,000,000 to give away, and this I propose to devote to the remission of indirect taxation."

According to the final balance sheet of the right hon. Gentleman, the corn tax produced last year—which was not a completed year—£2,000,000, and he calculated that a completed year would represent £2 400,000. The remission of the tax, therefore, means a loss to the revenue of £2,400,000. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division invites us to substitute a remission of 2d. on tea. In the two years 1901-2 the tax of 6d. per pound on tea produced an average of £6,000,000, or £1,000,000 for every penny. Therefore, a remission of 2d. on tea would mean a loss of £2,000,000 to the revenue, so that the repeal of the corn tax means an additional loss of £400,000. In making that remission the Chancellor of the Exchequer said—

> "Tea has many attractions; it is the safest and the least contentious subject of taxation; it cannot be said to be dear; I do not think a duty of 6d. is very excessive; tea is not strictly a necessary of life."

and he said later—

> "Corn is a necessary of life in a greater degree than any other article."

Under these circumstances, I submit that a loss of £400,000 is a very small matter, and one which every one would be willing to incur in order to get rid of a tax on corn which is a necessary of life in a greater degree than any other article. The other point I desire to refer to is the assertion of the right hon. Gentleman that this remission of taxation gives no substantial relief to the consumer. We have had a good many statements as to whether the price of bread has increased since the tax was imposed. During the last year, and whilst this tax has been in force, the price of bread has increased.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: Where?

*SIR JOSEPH LEESE: I must protest against these somewhat discourteous interruptions.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: I simply asked where? The price of bread has not increased in Manchester.

*SIR JOSEPH LEESE: There is a very interesting official paper published by the Board of Trade called the *Labour Gazette*, and ever since the corn tax was imposed there has appeared in it monthly a list of about twenty-four of the largest towns in England, opposite to which has been placed the price of bread both before and after the tax. In a great many of those towns there has been no variation whatever in the price of bread, but in London, with a population of 6,500,000 people, the price of bread has risen from 4d. and 4½d. in May, 1902, to 4½d. and 5d. in May, 1903. If you assume that the consumption of bread in London is at least one quartern loaf per head of the population, which is the lowest possible estimate, then we find that the rise of ½d. per quartern loaf means no less than £13,000 a week, or £720,000 a year. I want to know how it can be said that the consumer has not paid this tax. If it is put upon the basis that two quartern loaves per head are consumed by the population of London per week, you will get £1,500,000 a year, and if we are going to have Old-Age Pensions you would want 2s. on corn at least. Under these circumstances I have no hesitation in giving my vote against this Amendment.

*MR. BECKETT (Yorkshire, N.R., Whitby): In this debate somewhat difficult issues of vast importance have been raised, but those issues, when once raised, must be faced, and they must be faced very soon. I was astonished when the Leader of the Opposition withdrew his Amendment. I think his Amendment would have given an opportunity to the House to thoroughly discuss this question, and it would have elicited information from the Government of which the House stands sorely in need at the present moment. I do not propose to say very much on this question. The corn tax, we are told, is liable to misrepresentation, but it is equally true that all such duties are liable to miscalculation, as they almost invariably work in a way different to that which is expected. I do not complain that under this duty the millers have found it possible to make a profit, but on the authority of the Prime Minister and the late Chancellor of the Exchequer we have it that they never anticipated that the millers would be able to derive a profit from this tax. This shows the extreme danger of tampering with the fiscal system of this country under which our prosperity has been realised. A member of the deputation headed by the right hon. Member for Sleaford said that this tax had put £400 into his pocket. His next-door neighbour would probably say, "Why should I not call for a duty which will put £400 into my pocket?" And thus they might go on, piling duty after duty upon the shoulders of the unfortunate consumer. The Government are accused of inconsistency, but I cannot see that they have been inconsistent in this matter at all except as regards certain Members. I understood that this duty on corn was imposed as a war tax only. [OPPOSITION cries of "No, no!"] I supported it as a war tax, and as a war tax a duty on corn, even though it falls upon the poorest of the poor, is eminently desirable, because it seems to me that the burden of a war tax, even though it cuts very deeply, is a wholesome and salutary check upon the passions of the people. I supported this tax as a war tax and not upon any other grounds. Hon. Members on this side of the House have asked why abandon £2,500,000 of taxes? I rejoice that this £2,500,000 is going to be abandoned, because as long as the Government have this money it will encourage them to continue in their career of reckless extravagance which all sides of the House are desirous of checking. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer has told us that in season and out of season he has endeavoured to check this expenditure. It seems that another Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer has been sacrificed on the altar of economy.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I really must ask my hon. friend to quote the words I used. I never blamed my colleagues, but I blamed the absence of public opinion in support of economy.

*MR. BECKETT: Of course, I entirely accept what my right hon. friend states, but I certainly understood him to say that had his respresentations on the subject of economy been attended to, he might not have been speaking from the place he occupies to-night. Anyhow, we know perfectly well, in regard to the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, that he did by every means in his power promote economy in the Government. I am not at all surprised that he did not meet with the support he was entitled to receive, when one of his late colleagues said not very long ago in reply to those who wished to see economy introduced, that they had betrayed the cloven hoof of economy. I hope the cloven hoof of economy will be betrayed to some purpose. I am glad to think that we can claim the late and present Chancellors of the Exchequer on our side. The increase in the normal expenditure of this country has been very remarkable. The total increase of the normal expenditure of the country has almost exactly corresponded to the increase of taxation levied to meet the special expenditure of the war. That is a very remarkable and an unsatisfactory state of affairs. I hope that by the repeal of this corn tax a stimulus will be given to those economical tendencies which I was glad to hear the Chancellor of the Exchequer express. In regard to this tax, I think we are entitled to ask, in view of what has been said since the Budget was introduced—Is this tax to be made a permanent part of the fiscal system of the country, or is it not? If it is to be made a permanent part of the fiscal system, why take it off now? You have the machinery for collecting the tax. It is always an expensive thing to establish machinery for collecting a new tax. If you are going to impose the tax next year, why take it off now? It seems to me that is not a very wise or sensible thing to do. I hope we have seen the last of the tax upon food. My right hon. friend behind me said he wished to see the corn tax imposed and maintained because it was the single and only weapon against other countries as a means of retaliation. Well, that is a fallacy which I should have thought was exploded by now, but it appears that it is still held by many people. In the first place, it seems to me that it is a mean and mistaken motive to suppose that one country should profit by the loss of another. That is why these retaliatory tariffs are such a fruitful source of national animosity. One country cannot profit by the loss of another. If you sell you must buy, and if they buy from you they must sell to you. Lord Beaconsfield said that the best means of fighting hostile tariffs was by free imports. [Cries of "No."] I think Lord Beaconsfield said that. [Cries of "No."] Anyhow, Sir, as regards retaliation Sir Robert Peel, in 1842, said—

> "It is for the interest of this country to buy cheap whether other countries will buy of us or not. We have a right to exhaust all means to induce other countries to do us justice, but if they persevere in refusing, the penalty is on us if we do not buy in the cheapest market."

Therefore, evidently, Sir Robert Peel was against all retaliatory duties, and the experience we have seen in foreign countries shows that he was entirely right. Russia and Germany have been engaged in a war of tariffs for three years, and so far from coming to a business arrangement, the wall of tariffs only appears to have been built higher than ever. I do not wish to discuss this question any further. I wish to point out, and I think it is the feeling of a great many on this side of the House, that we have drifted into an impossible position. The members of the Government have been speaking with different minds and different voices, until we are in a state of absolute bewilderment. It seems to me that when any member of the Government speaks or writes now, he will have to preface his remarks by saying, "Without prejudice." The Colonial Secretray has announced a great policy, which is hailed and acclaimed by a great many people as the greatest act of statesmanship to be found in the annals of this country, and on the other hand, the Chancellor of the Exchequer tells us that that policy is detrimental to the interests of the country. Was the Chancellor of the Exchequer speaking for himself or for the Government?

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): Hear, hear! that is the point.

MR. BECKETT: What is the Party to do? We look to this Bench for light and guidance (pointing to the Treasury Bench), and the only person who can clear up the present situation is the Prime Minister himself. We are entitled to demand from the Prime Minister a clear and accurate expression of his views in such a crisis as this. It will not do for him to remain secluded and wrapped in philosophic doubt. What are the questions we are asked to consider? Are we asked to consider a principle, and if so, what principle? Is it the principle of free trade as against protection? That has been argued out fifty years ago, and we do not require time to consider it. If we are asked to consider a plan, then I say produce your plan; let us have something to consider. This question cannot be hung up for two years. You cannot throw a bomb-shell into the middle of the industries of this country, and expect people to go on with their business as usual, waiting to see when and where it will burst. Whether this proposed change is calculated to accomplish eventually good or evil, at all events there will be a most immense dislocation of the trade and commerce of the country, and in view of that change there will be disturbance and uncertainty everywhere. That uncertainty ought not to be prolonged; and the Party have a right to demand from the Prime Minister that at the earliest opportunity he will give a clear expression of his views on the subject.

*MR. THEODORE TAYLOR (Lancashire, Radcliffe): The greater part of the reasons that may be urged against the corn tax has not been before us to-day—the effect, namely, of the tax on other taxes and on national policy. No one has ever pretended, so far as I know, that this corn tax, so far as it has been imposed, has been very severely felt. The reason why we objected to it was because it was the thin edge of a thick wedge which was to be driven by the sledge-hammer, not wielded by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, but by other hands, into our national prosperity and national unity. Some of us believed, two years ago, when the sugar tax was imposed that that was the beginning of a fiscal policy of retrogression, and that feeling was strengthened last year when this small tax was put upon the food of the people. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer then—and we knew that he was genuine, we believed in his intention though not in his action—denied that the tax would have a protective effect. I think he must now admit that some of us were right when we then said, as we do now, that this tax would be used by other people for another and a more sinister purpose. We have heard to-day that this tax was very very small, that it was a mere little thing, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford has, in tones of indignation, told us that he has been wasting his eloquence inside and outside Parliament in strongly defending the tax. It is a very sad spectacle to see such a right hon. Gentleman as the Member for Sleaford and his friends wasting their eloquence, but I am sorry that they have not a better object on which to expend it. But the right hon. Gentleman has no right to complain. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer last year warned him over and over again that though the natural sequence of the tax might appear to be protection, it was not intended in that sense at all. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer has never denied what the present Chancellor of the Exchequer has admitted to-day, that the burden of the tax, whether large or small, falls on the consumer. It was intended as a step in the "broadening of the basis of taxation." This was a broadening which we opposed because it put an additional burden upon certain backs in the country. I was glad to hear the Chancellor of the Exchequer say to-day that his greatest reason of all for abolishing it was because it was a burden that fell on the weakest backs of all. That is the reason why some of us have, in and out of season, always protested with all our strength against this tax on the poorest of the people. It is a tax which falls with peculiar severity on those with small incomes—men like agricultural labourers whose total incomes may be only £40 to £45 a year; and those inhabitants of large cities like the dockers in London, whose work is very insecure, and who, when they have paid their heavy rents, have nothing left over the margin of subsistence. This is an argument which must weigh with all sympathetic men. But the Colonial Secretary knows better than that. He says that this tax has not fallen on anybody in this country. He alleges that this "shilling duty was met by a reduction of price and freights in the United States, and did not in any way fall on the consumer here." Why then, repeal it? Why not double and treble it instead? Why not go on increasing the taxes *ad libitum*? Why should we not go on levying duties on a sufficient number of articles to make foreigners pay all our national expenses? If so, I do not see why the Old-Age Pension scheme should stop at a niggardly 5s. a week to begin at sixty-five years of age. Why not start with a pension of £10 a week beginning at twenty-one years of age? No, Sir; in spite of the Colonial Secretary, no one really believes the theory that we can levy tribute on other nations by imposing duties on ourselves. Such a mistake is only possible where the tax, as in this case, is a small tax on an article of large consumption. The moment you increase the scale you show the fallacy of the argument. Because a small tax on a large consumption has not done much direct mischief, it does not follow that the principle is sound. If a little blood is lost by a pin-prick and no harm is done, it does not follow that continual blood-letting is innocuous. The only clear line to draw is no duty or some duty. Every little helps. Once you start a tax, which by being made larger becomes obviously protective, you open the door to the man who demands protection under the name of free trade.

I do not know of any cause which has so much to complain of from its professed friends as free trade. I have rarely heard of a man who was avowedly Protectionist. A man always advocates a tax which will lead to protection because it is such good free trade that he wants to get it as a weapon to force other people to act contrary to what they believe to be their interest. I do not believe that a corn tax or any other tax will compel other nations to act contrary to what they believe is their own interest. Surely the late Chancellor of the Exchequer must have found by this time that once you give way on a matter of principle you have no principle at the back of you when you desire to resist further encroachments in the direction of protection. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford referred to "two most deserving and depressed industries." If this principle was to be extended how many other industries should we hear of as deserving and depressed? I am a Free Trader and I believe that a corn tax is the very last tax which it was thought could be imposed in the interests of protection. I am a woollen manufacturer, and if public money is to be spent in the interests of various trades, I should speak for a share of it for my own trade. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford says that capital will be lost as a result of the repeal of the corn tax. The right hon. Gentleman says that industries were started as a result of the tax which will now disappear. We know of other countries where large industries have been built up in absolute dependence upon duties originally levied for revenue only, and which to this day are carried on solely by protective duties at the expense of the consumers there. Protection grows by what it feeds upon, and the ultimate effect of keeping on a tax like this is the very best reason for opposing it. I frankly admit that its effect on the cost of living hitherto has not been very great. I do not think anything is to be gained by exaggerating that. But although it is not great in amount, the principle is admitted and laid down that we could interfere with articles of prime necessity for the sake of revenue. What has actually been the effect of the corn tax itself on the farming industry? We have heard from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that our agricultural rivals in Denmark, Holland, and Germany, have profited by the importation of cheap offals sent from this country in order to get the drawback. Not only have they had that advantage but a large amount of offals formerly sent to this country from America and elsewhere has been diverted to Denmark, Holland, and Germany; and that helps in the production of butter, cheese and eggs, and in that way enters into competition with our own agricultural producers. I know that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford would say that if farmers in this country are losing by continental competition, a duty should be put upon the produce of the competing countries. That is the real secret of the whole business. Once you begin you cannot stop. There is no dividing line of principle between high duty and low duty. The only dividing line is between a duty and no duty.

The great argument for the abolition of the corn duty, next to what I may call the humanitarian argument, is the argument that the corn duty and all such duties tend more or less to increase the cost of living, and, therefore, the cost of the production of every commodity. If there is any country that cannot bear the great burden of Protection it is this country, because we have to import a larger part of our food than any other country in the world. Belgium is the only other country that does not produce nearly all the cereals it requires. We cannot produce in this country all the food we require. We must buy it with our own manufactures, and if we increase the cost of living we increase the cost of every kind of labour, and unless the working man is to be impoverished—which I believe no hon. Member desires — we must give him extra wages to pay for the extra cost of living. But if the prices of the manufacturer are raised his trade is lessened, and by and by wages will be lower in consequence of the very artifice which was intended to raise them. This principle of free trade is not a worn-out shibboleth. Our opposition to the corn tax does not represent a worn-out shibboleth. We do not advocate free trade to-day because it was good for us in 1846, but because it is a national necessity of 1903. It is no worn-out shibboleth that corn is the raw material for many trades; that corn is a food of animals; that bread is the staff of life. It is no worn-out shibboleth that in raising the cost of living you must impoverish the worker. That is as true to-day as it was in 1881, when the present Colonial Secretary summed up the matter by saying that—

> "A tax on food would mean a decline in wages, because the same amount of money would have a smaller purchasing power. It would bring about the loss of that gigantic export trade which the industry and energy of the country, working under conditions of absolute freedom, had been able to create."

We have had a speech from a Lancashire Member representing an industrial constituency advocating a corn tax. I also represent a Lancashire industrial constituency, and that constituency returns me for the purpose of opposing as strongly as I am able a policy which I believe is bound not only to injure agriculture and the manufacturing interests of this country, but which I believe will be the apple of discord between the colonies and the mother country. We must never forget that the product of one industry is the raw material of another, and that labour is a raw material of all industries. So whatever we tax I trust in future that tax will not be in the nature of a tax upon raw material, but a direct tax on the possessors of incomes.

MR. HARDY (Kent, Ashford), who was indistinctly heard, was understood to say: The conduct of the Government in this matter has put us in a more embarrassing position than we were a little while ago, when the Budget was introduced. We have looked to the members of the Government for light and leading on large questions of policy which we have to set before our constituents, and those of us who are not eloquent are perhaps accustomed to take too much of our speeches from the arguments of right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Bench, and I can assure them that the arguments have been in many cases a perfect banquet to our constituents, to whom they have been most agreeable. When listening to the arguments addressed to the House this evening by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I thought they should be divided into two classes, one of which would have been more appropriate last year when the tax was instituted, than now when the tax has been in existence for more than a year. If the right hon. Gentleman could have imagined that the tax was going to be a burden on the poorest of the poor of this country, this tax ought never to have been imposed. While in regard to new arguments applicable to the new policy, I confess I think the right hon. Gentleman's speech is rather bare of any facts that we can take back to our constituents as arguments in favour of a reversal of policy. One of the arguments we could scarcely use again, and that was that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to call the tax a permanent tax, otherwise the people of the country would not carry on their business in the usual way and he would not get his income. I am quite sure the right hon. Gentleman who sits below me would not abuse his position by an argument of that character. When he said he regarded this tax as a permanent tax we were justified in going down to the country with the arguments we did. We have to remember the arguments that were addressed to us last year, such as that put forward by the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster-General, who said he would be very much surprised if in that dim and distant future, when hon. Gentlemen opposite sat on the Government Benches, any of them would favour the repeal of this corn tax. The real fact is that this tax has nothing to do with the matter at all. It is a question of competition. If we wanted an argument, the last which fell from the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be the best we could have for the continuation of this tax, because he told us that the tea tax put on two years ago had not injured the consumers in the slightest. Therefore we come to this curious condition of things: that where we have an article produced mostly by this country we should keep on the duty because the producer pays it, and if we have an article produced mostly by a foreign country we remit the tax because it is paid by the consumer. I confess I cannot see how you are going to make a distinction. If it is so clearly proved that in the tea duty the producer and not the consumer had to bear the burden, as was evidenced by the facts put forward, we may apply the same arguments to the case of corn. I think that we humble followers of the Government are put in a very unfortunate position by our leaders, but I do not wish to dwell upon that. We have not heard the weighty arguments which should have been addressed to us, especially in view of the larger question that is looming before us so immensely at the present moment. It was impossible for me to allow the debate to pass without entering my protest against the conduct of His Majesty's Government. I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford will not proceed to a division on his Amendment at this particular moment, because it is directed against the Finance Bill itself. In many points I support that Bill. I helped to vote the money for carrying on the affairs of the Empire for which the Budget Bill is essential. I do not think it would be wise to vote for the rejection of the Bill. Fortunately the Bill itself brings the issue clearly before us, as in the first clause we have an opportunity of giving our opinion whether we wish it to stand, and on that point I am perfectly prepared to give my vote against the repeal of this tax.

MR. VICARY GIBBS (Hertfordshire, St. Albans): It is quite distressing to hear one speaker after another get up in this House, and attack the great and distinguished men on the Front Bench, just as if they were a row of dolls put there to be thrown at. There is hardly a person in this House, wherever he sits, who has not had something to say against the Government in criticism of their conduct. I shall not venture to do anything of that kind. I am a most servile follower, and if I could only find out what they are after, I would follow it, but the more I listen the more confused I become. Whether it was in consequence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's oratory not being of that pellucid character that he generally displays, or whether it was that he was so confused as not to be able to distinguish between himself and the Cabinet to which he belongs, that he succeeded in confusing one of his humble followers, I cannot say. But I have been able to make out that he gives a very different reason now for removing this tax than he did before. Then it was that these duties were liable to misapprehension. Now it is that this tax has injured the farmer, it has hurt the miller, it has ground down the poor, and it has been paid by the wretched and unhappy consumer of this country, and not by the foreigner. But when did he find out that his proposals were so mischievous and were ruining the country? Not content with introducing this mischievous measure as a temporary reason for raising money, he went on to say, "it is so good that we will make it permanent." The Chancellor of the Exchequer first said it was a most splendid thing, but he now finds out that it is perfectly mischievous, and is going to hurt the consumer. Has he not read the Colonial Secretary's letter? I wish these great men would make up their minds before they come down to the House. If we are to hang let us all hang together. What am I to do? I go down to my constituents and tell them exactly what I am told, but when I tell them one thing one day, and then tell them another thing another day, I am afraid that melancholy results may follow, and that there is a chance of the House being deprived of the inestimable privilege of seeing me one of its Members. I cannot help saying one thing about the paper which the right hon. Gentleman read while you were for a moment absent from us. It was very important, but I think it would have been much more satisfactory if he could have distinguished between the part which was his own, and that which was the Cabinet's. Valuable as his views are, it would be still more valuable if we could find out those of the Cabinet. What we want is a disclosure as to the future—to know what they are going to do; whether they are going to support the views which the Colonial Secretary has put forward, or whether they are not. I am going to support those views when the Colonial Secretary does put them forward, although I cannot give the House my reasons now. I should like to know whether the Cabinet are going to support the right hon. Gentleman, because it would be interesting to get some definite statement from them of their views.

And, it being half-past Seven of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned till this Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

FINANCE BILL.

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Amendment to Question [9th June], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Which Amendment was—

"To leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question in order to add the words, 'This House considers that the financial policy of His Majesty's Government, in the remission of indirect taxation imposed only last year for purposes of a permanent character, involves a needless and injurious disturbance of trade and a serious loss to the Revenue, without substantial relief to the consumer; and that, if any remission of indirect taxation is considered necessary by His Majesty's Government, such remission ought to be made by a reduction of the duties proposed to be levied on tea or other articles of general consumption.' "—(*Mr. Chaplin.*)

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate resumed.

*MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, E. Toxteth): The Amendment we have been discussing to-day has been rather overshadowed by certain larger issues which have come before us, and by certain dramatic, almost catastrophic developments which have taken place this afternoon. As a consequence, the question of the corn tax which was imposed last year by the Government, important as that departure was in their fiscal policy, does not hold to-day the same prominent position in our minds that it did some time ago. Even though the interest in that tax has to a certain extent dwindled, a humble supporter of the Government, even if he sits below the Gangway—a position ordinarily associated with considerable independence—must yet find a certain difficulty in knowing what course to pursue. But I belong to a small, though perhaps fortunate, group of Members sitting on this side of the House who are in the position that whether we vote for the Amendment or against it, we shall not be guilty of any inconsistency. I was not in the House when the corn tax was imposed, and did not directly share the responsibility for its imposition, but I took, at the time of my election to this House, a certain position upon the question of the free import of food and raw materials into the country. Without any inspiration, official or otherwise, I placed in the forefront of my address a statement to the effect that I considered the free entry of food and raw materials into our ports a prime necessity for our industrial population. In taking up that position I had in mind that we were dealing in England, not with a new and undeveloped country, but with an old country, a highly-organised community, and a densely-populated one, which has grown up during the last fifty years on the basis of a free entry of food for our industrial population, and of raw materials for our manufactures. Therefore, I cannot say that I hailed with particular enthusiasm the corn tax when it was first established. I still feel very strongly that we cannot play tricks with a country like England. In a highly-organised community, with an industrial population closely crowded together, we must not treat that community as a subject for experiment, but rather for delicate and careful fiscal treatment. But when the motive of the tax was fully explained by the late Chancellor, and we were assured it had nothing in it of a protective character, that it was meant simply for the purpose of broadening the basis of our taxation, forming a permanent part of our fiscal system, and contributing something towards the onerous expenditure of the war in South Africa, and further, that the tax itself was one almost infinitesimal in its character, I felt with many others on this side that it was a tax which might very well form a permanent part of our fiscal system. But though I felt that, I further felt that there might be a certain danger even in the introduction of the principle of taxing the food of this country, though in so moderate a form, a principle which once established tends to develop. This lends itself to the protection of particular industries, and we cannot protect one industry without sooner or later being faced by a demand to protect them all. From that point of view I feel that we have to go warily in this matter, particularly as this country and the Empire rely in a peculiar degree upon its shipping and carrying trade.

The question of the free entry into our ports of food and raw materials is one which cannot possibly be dissociated from the prosperity of some at any rate of our leading manufacturing and industrial activities, and foremost amongst those I should place the shipping trade, which admittedly, whatever may be said about other trades in the country, has achieved a position of permanent prosperity under the free trade system which has enabled this country to secure the carrying trade of the world, and above all has furnished the one link on which the Empire must rely for cohesion—control of the seas and the maintenance of free and open communication between the different parts of the Empire. When I think of the position of the Empire and its possibilities I feel that in comparison with this question of our mercantile marine and the control of the seas all questions of a fiscal character as between one part of the Empire and another must take a subordinate place. I do not consider the tax is of a protectionist character. It is so minute that it is impossible to say by whom it is paid. But it is moonshine to say that it is paid by nobody. A burden of 4 per cent. on any industry must be borne by somebody. If in this particular case a certain amount falls upon the producer, a certain amount upon the railway companies, and a certain amount upon the consumer, that is not an argument that a considerable increase of the tax would not mean a very serious burden upon the great consuming public. A suggestion has been made by the Colonial Secretary that this duty has been paid by the railway companies of the United

States of America. My point is that this is not a duty on wheat alone, but that it is also a duty on barley, oats, and maize, and I find that in 1902 the amount of oats, barley and maize imported into this country does not fall far short of the amount of wheat and flour. I find we draw from Russia, Roumania, Bulgaria, Turkey, the United States of America and the Argentine; that we import a total quantity of 191,000,000 cwt. of wheat-flour and feeding stuffs into these islands, and that of that quantity only 24,000,000 cwts., or one-eighth of the whole, comes from British dominions beyond the sea. That shows that one fact not to be overlooked in the discussion of this matter is the large source of supply from which we draw our food, and perhaps also the importance of keeping the area as wide as we can make it. Looking at those figures as a whole we can surely come to this conclusion: that any remission of this duty such as has been proposed, or such as was at one time contemplated, to allow for the free admission from British dominions beyond the seas would have been of a much more trifling character than would be imagined by many who looked on this as a tax on food and flour alone.

We have had an interesting discussion to-day as to the motives of the Government for repealing this tax. Though I was not in the House at the debates on the imposition of this tax, I have come to the conclusion that every argument that has been brought forward in favour of the repeal of this tax was clearly an argument against its imposition. I must on that point, which is the only one in which I agree with him, associate myself with the right hon. Member for Sleaford, who said these arguments about the unpopularity of the tax and all the other arguments in favour of its repeal were arguments against its imposition. But I do not want to bring vinegar to wounds already bleeding sufficiently. Certainly my reading of Parliamentary history does not recall so extraordinary a position as that in which we are now placed. I could say a good deal on this subject, but that is not my business. I do not think it is the duty of a supporter of the Government to do what has been already so effectively done by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. If the repeal of this duty is a matter of party tactics; if it is done because the Government thought it was unpopular in the country, then it is an expression of the greatest futility and ineptitude. I cannot believe, although it has been stated, that this is the real motive that lies behind the repeal of this tax. But then I am confronted with this difficulty, that on fiscal principles its repeal is equally difficult to understand, because the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I think the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, are not indisposed to admit that this tax, small in its character and innocuous in its results, furnished £2,500,000 to an Exchequer which sorely needed it, and was one that might very well be retained in the fiscal system of the country. So I have been driven into the region of surmise, and where all is mysterious on the Treasury Bench a certain amount of surmise below the Gangway is possibly permissible. I have endeavoured to put the most favourable construction on the action of the Government in repealing this tax—a construction which I think is borne out by the speeches of the Prime Minister and by certain indications of a personal character which speak volumes to those who can read between the lines It appears to me that what has happened is possibly this—that the Cabinet under the spell of a certain dominant will have found themselves confronted with the necessity of placing, sooner or later, before the country a much larger issue than the question of the corn tax, and some conscientious Member of the Government, who is determined that this great question, if it is to be fought out, should be fought out free of prejudice, has laid it down in the Cabinet that they should go to the country on the large issue of preferential tariffs free of the encumbrance of this small and innocuous tax, and that the question should not be prejudged in any way by the imposition or retention of such a tax. If that construction be correct, all I can say is that it is heroic, but it is not practical politics. Still, I am prepared to support the Government in the repeal of the tax because I believe some such consideration as that is moving in their minds, or, at any rate, in the minds of some Members of the Government.

In any case, if we are to fight over the battles of fifty years ago, and to be confronted with the phantoms of the 40's and the 50's, it is better that we should get rid of all superfluous baggage, all preconceived notions and ideas in regard to our fiscal system, and go to the task with unbiassed minds and unfettered judgment.

We are told by the Prime Minister that this question of preferential tariffs is one for discussion; by the Colonial Secretary that it is one for discussion and decision; by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that it is one for inquiry and condemnation. It is somewhat difficult amid these discordant voices to know exactly where we stand, and what to expect. It is absolutely futile to say that the Colonial Secretary in his famous speech at Birmingham spoke only for himself. He made no pretence about it. He said distinctly that the Government were going to the country on this issue. How could that be taken merely as an expression of personal and academic opinion? This issue cannot be much longer delayed. We shall have to come to a decision, whatever may be the reluctance of the leaders of the Unionist Party to make the plunge, and it is a decision to which there has been no parallel since Cæsar bade his legions cross the Rubicon. We are bound to face this matter out. Nothing is to be gained by concealing the difficult position in which we stand, and, so far as I am concerned, I shall approach the consideration of this great question of free trade and Imperial unity with an unbiassed mind. I am not "a free trader"; I am "a convinced free trader." I am not a free trader in the sense of looking upon free trade as a party badge, or a flag to be flaunted before the country. I am a free trader because the arguments which support the doctrine of free trade carry conviction to my mind, and because I believe the prosperity of this country has in great measure been built up on the free imports we receive. When we are asked, as we shall be by this larger issue, to modify these ideas, and possibly to incur economic loss for the sake of Imperial gain, I shall hold it to be my duty, as it will be the duty of every citizen of this great Empire, to approach the question in a spirit, not of Party, but of the deepest gravity, as one of the most vital issues that have ever been raised in our history, and, speaking for myself, it will require no ordinary argument, but all the debating force and intellectual keenness of the Colonial Secretary, to carry to my mind convictions adverse to those which I have always held.

*MR. TOULMIN: The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the stand he is now taking, may, I think, rely on the solid vote of this side of the House. I do not know that we could have had a better summary of the arguments which influenced us last year in opposing the imposition of the tax than the reasons he has given us this afternoon in favour of its repeal. There is one question which appears to me to be of far greater importance than the mere question of the effect the shilling duty has had upon any individual or class in the country, and that is the question of our policy towards the colonies. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford commended the tax as being likely to cement the union between the mother country and the colonies. We on this side welcome the repeal of the tax because it will make more difficult any tinkering with our relationship with the colonies. I do not think our union with the colonies has shown any signs of decay, or any necessity for plastering, pointing, or cementing; it is a union which rests on something very different from mere temporal fiscal advantages, or monetary reasons of any kind. To raise any such question will bring up very delicate points of colonial responsibility and self-government.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is now entering upon a discussion of a scheme of preferential tariffs.

*MR. TOULMIN: I wish merely to state that that is one of the reasons why we on this side approve the repeal of the tax. So long as it remained it was open to be used and increased for such purposes. A year ago I referred to the foot-print outside the cottage door in Lancashire. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer would have had us believe that that foot-print would remain solitary, and that this tax would remain at a shilling. What has occurred since then shows that the instincts of Lancashire were right in objecting to an old doorway which had been built up being again opened, lest the old path should be pursued. It was not the fear of the burden the shilling might impose, but the fear of its growth, and if we had known as much as we now know, since the speech of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, that fear would have been greater. What has the right hon. Gentleman told us? That he has had to resist claims for colonial preferences with regard not merely to corn, but also to wine, tea, and sugar, so that even more dangerous than we knew was the road opened by this corn tax. Whatever may have been the reasons which influenced the Government, we on this side uphold the system of free trade because it enables us to select the best productions of nature and of man in every country, to bring them together here, and, by the labour and skill of our workpeople, so to manufacture, alter, and combine them that they are sold to advantage, not merely in the home market, but also in foreign and colonial markets. The repeal of the corn tax puts us again into the position of being able to say that that is our policy. The tax was said to enlarge the basis of taxation. It is because it enlarges the basis of taxation that we object to it. Enlarging the basis of taxation too often means increasing the burden on the small wage-earners and the small annuitants and relieving the burden on the classes above. I am rather surprised that some of the facts connected with the tax are not recognised by those who object to its repeal. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford said that bread was sensibly lower in price, and that it had only been raised as an electioneering move. It has been said that the price was put up by the Co-operative Society of Bury the week before the election, and lowered immediately after. Then, too, the Radical bakers of Bury were said to have raised the price before the election, and to have lowered it after. That is a libel on their commercial smartness, and I certainly fail to see how a Liberal loaf at 3½d. and a Tory loaf at 3d. would have been a good electioneering cry. As to the Co-operative Society, they did not alter the price of bread. What they did, as I understand, was to put up the price of flour, as neighbouring societies had already done. It was done at an ordinary business meeting for business reasons, and the price has remained the same ever since. I should like to know where the price of bread is sensibly lower. I know of one place, Oldham, but that is simply due to the ordinary fluctuations, owing to the competition of neighbouring places. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol said that if the price of bread had been affected it would have been affected universally. I do not quite follow that argument. If the tax had been a unit of price, 4s., which about equals ½d. on a four-pound loaf, it would have caused bread to rise a ½d. all over the kingdom, but as it was only 1s. it might be expected to raise the price in about one-fourth of the places in the kingdom, and, singularly enough, in the list of towns given in the *Labour Gazette* a rise of price is shown in seven places out of twenty-six. The price has risen more than a ½d. in London, from 3½d. and 4½d. to 4½d. and 5d. and in the face of that great rise in the chief city of the country the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford says the price of bread is sensibly lower. It has risen also in Bristol, Cardiff, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Dundee, and Belfast, which may be taken as representative towns. But this question will not be of great importance in a few hours as the tax will be repealed. There will remain, however, the great question of what does the repeal of the tax mean in reference to the policy of the Government. The Prime Minister frequently speaks about our loyalty to "out-worn formulæ." We are entitled to know what are the out-worn formulæ to which he refers. What does he object to? What does he attack in the established policy of the country? Formulæ are summary statements of ascertained facts. What are the facts in regard to our commerce which he attacks? The quotation has already been made from Sir Robert Peel that the penalty is on us if we do not buy in the cheapest market. Does the Prime Minister attack that formula? I think we have the right to ask those who are attacking the formulæ of free trade to define their position. How long are they going to remain on the fence? An inquiry has been spoken of, but how long will the country tolerate uncertainty in questions which touch the foundations of our national prosperity? I do not think there could be a greater impeachment of their patriotism than to suppose that the Government, or any member of it, will leave the country long in doubt as to their true policy. This tax will go, and it is going sooner than I expected. I welcome its disappearance, and I shall certainly rejoice to see the last of it.

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University): I desire to state shortly my reasons for supporting the policy of the Government as embodied in the Bill. In ordinary circumstances a supporter of the Government would content himself with recording his vote with them in the Lobby; but the circumstances of this case are rather peculiar. Nothing could be more satisfactory than the reasons given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for opposing the Amendment; but those reasons, as I understand, are the right hon. Gentleman's own personal convictions, and he was speaking in his own name, and not for the Government he represents. [Cries of "No, no!"] At any rate that is what I understood. But utterances have been made by another Member of the Government which are entirely at variance with the views of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and which, although they are now said to be that right hon. Gentleman's personal opinions, may hereafter become those of the Government—just as much as the Chancellor of the Exchequer's. He was rather surprised to hear that there was going to be an inquiry made by the Government. We are not told by whom the inquiry is to be made, or the nature of the inquiry, and a little further information on this subject from the First Lord of the Treasury would be extremely interesting to the House and very consoling to some of the right hon. Gentleman's supporters. It cannot be the facts of the case that are to be inquired into, because all the facts as to the trade between this country and foreign countries and the colonies are to be found in the statistical abstracts and reports of the Board of Trade, and inquiry can be made by any intelligent Member of the Government in the library in a very short time so far as the facts are concerned. Is it possible that the Government are going to inquire into principles? Is it possible they are going to bring down Professor Marshall or some other learned and discreet professor to inform them as to the principles that ought to be applied to these facts? I should have thought that all this was already well known to the Government, and that after an intelligent study of the facts they could have applied the principles of political economy to those facts and formed an opinion upon this important question. In the circumstances, it becomes excusable in supporters of the Government not to content themselves with a mere vote in the lobby, but to express the grounds on which they give their most hearty and earnest support to the Bill now before the House.

My own grounds are presented by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I rejoice in the repeal of the corn tax, because, as the late Chancellor of the Exchequer has said, it is not only a tax capable of being misapprehended, but it has become the subject of misapprehension, and we cannot say now that the retention of this tax would be a mere question of a shilling duty on corn. We are face to face with the possibility of having this tax raised in accordance with a policy we cannot discuss in this Bill. We are in imminent danger—and it is avowed by the Colonial Secretary—of having the tax raised into a substantial duty, which will raise the price of the people's food, and in that case there is the question of who bears the tax? Notwithstanding those nice little discussions about who feels the tax—whether it is the railway companies or the steamship owners, the American producer, the baker, or the corn seller, who bears the cost—it will become, as is avowed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, a tax which will raise the cost of the food of the people. Therefore, I suppose it is perfectly in order for a Member who cannot look with equanimity on the cost of the food of the people being raised, to give his reasons, not only for abolishing this tax, but for asking the House to maintain its old principle in refusing to entertain the idea of laying on taxation which will materially increase the cost of the necessaries of life. In former days such a proposition as I have stated would certainly never have been made in the House of Commons, where this principle was looked upon as a political axiom. I remember twenty years ago, when the idea of Imperial federation became prominent, this very question of the possibility of drawing more closely the colonies and the mother country was discussed, but all the discussion came to an end upon the discovery that it involved the necessity of taxing the food of the people, and for that reason it was at once pronounced to be impracticable. But we now live in days when obstacles which were a complete bar to the enterprise of our own predecessors are to be surmounted, and the food of the people is to be taxed in such a manner as to increase its cost. Therefore I ask the House to allow me to state why I believe this to be a most disastrous policy, which neither the Government nor the House of Commons ought for one moment to entertain. My reason is that a tax upon food, however excellent its object, is one which the people of the United Kingdom in their present condition cannot possibly endure. It is obvious there are some classes who can bear it. The rich could bear it, and, I think, what are called the middle classes, the traders and shopkeepers, and the lower middle classes could bear it, and possibly a great many of the working classes, such as skilled workmen and artisans and members of the great trade unions. But the great mass of the labour of this country is unskilled labour, unorganised, and very often ill-paid.

Among the great mass of the people of this country there is such a thing as a living wage. There is a certain number of shillings per week which will suffice for the support of an average workman with an average family in average comfort. The necessaries which a man has to provide with his wages are food, clothes, and shelter. The cost of food and clothes is practically uniform all over the country, but the cost of shelter is very variable, and it cost more for shelter in London, for instance, than in Devonshire. Therefore the minimum living wage varies in various parts of the country. It is greater in the towns and less in the country, but in every place there is a wage which would reasonably support an ordinary average family. How many workmen get that wage? That of course is a question of opinion, and the statistics available are not accurate enough to state it with positive accuracy. Nevertheless a very fair general conjecture can be made, and it may be said that about two-thirds of the working people of the country get a living wage and one-third do not. [OPPOSITION cries of "No, no!"]

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich): Two-thirds of the country.

SIR JOHN GORST: The effect of raising the price of food would be to raise the standard of the living wage all over the country. The result would be that you would plunge a number of people who are now getting a living wage into the class of those who are not, and you would also press the people who are now not getting a living wage into still greater poverty and hunger. Immediately you raise the price of food you will greatly increase the poverty and hardship, and misery among the people of this country. It is said that wages will rise—I have heard it stated, but I have never heard it proved. I think that if the Government will take Professor Marshall into their confidence, he would advise them that the raising of the price of food will not necessarily increase the rate of wages. Even if it were so, wages would not rise immediately. The people will have to fight for increased wages. What will be the condition of the rising generation meanwhile? If the House at the present time would realise the true condition of the children who went to their schools, they would be perfectly appalled at the degeneracy which is coming upon the people. The condition of the people of this country, and especially the condition of the rising generation, is such that, unless something is speedily done to improve it, we must make up our minds that this country will degenerate in physique. These are considerations which led me to say that nothing will persuade me to be a party to such a tax on food as will materially increase its price to the people of this country. I would rather leave Parliament than be a party to any such policy. Some people say in a sneering kind of voice, "This is mere parochialism." I believe it is true Imperialism. I cannot conceive anything more mad and foolish than to attempt to found a great Imperial Power upon a population that is not healthy and strong and well brought up. To my mind the true course for Imperialists now to take is to set to work to mend the condition of the people of this country, and not to make it worse by putting taxes on food. When we have got a generation of children growing up that are healthy, properly fed, and properly taught, we may hope to extend the great moral empire of this country, and we may hope that in the future the people of this country will be as glorious in the world as they have been in the past.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): The House finds itself to-night in a very novel and extraordinary position. Those who sit on my side of the House have the pleasure of supporting the Government in accordance with the arguments which they addressed to the House a year ago. Last year we had to oppose the Government when they were proposing this war tax, and this year we find that like the savage king they are adoring what they burned and burning what they adored. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has repeated those arguments with great force, and with an elaborate array of figures in order to show that this tax would raise the price of bread and would press heavily upon the poor. It is true that the First Lord of the Treasury, in a speech made a few days ago, had indicated that his reasons for repealing the tax were not those which have been taken by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But I do not feel much anxiety on that account. It is a sort of rule of this House that a Minister must never confess that he has made a mistake, and the First Lord is bound to tell the House that all the reasons which compelled him to put on the tax last year induced him to repeal it this year. I cannot feel that there is here a case of simple, honest conversion on the part of the Government to the principles of free trade. Language has been used and opinions have been expressed which make us ask and make it impossible that we should not ask why is it that the Government have decided to repeal this tax? They speak with very different voices and we want to know, and nearly everybody who has joined in the debate wants to know, why is it that this tax is being repealed? If the reasons given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer were shared by his colleagues there could be no question about the matter, for he says that the consumer does pay, but there is another voice which says that the consumer does not pay. If the producer pays why should the tax be repealed? It is proposed that there should be inquiry. Inquiry might begin at this point, and we would like to hear the Colonial Secretary giving his reasons for believing that it is the producer and not the consumer who pays this tax. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will also tell us whether if the beneficent foreign producer pays the 1s. duty he will also pay a 2s. or a 5s. duty. If the consumer does not pay, the price does not rise, and if the price does not rise, where does the right hon. Member for Sleaford come in with his increased land cultivation and increased home-grown food supplies? We are told by the Colonial Secretary that one of the great advantages of having a tax upon food would be that a greater quantity of food would be produced in this country, and that the difficulty we have in getting foreign food supplied would be to a large extent met. But it is clear that if the price does not rise the motive the right hon. Member for Sleaford refers to would not operate at all. That appears to have struck the First Lord of the Treasury, because when he met the deputation he asked them what their interest was if it was not in a protectionist tax. I think these questions are strictly relevant to the present debate, because if we are to repeal the tax we ought to be sure of the ground on which we repeal it. It is a question seriously and solemnly brought before us in a peculiar way.

We are asked to go back on what a large majority of this House did a year ago, and if we are to make that change we ought to be sure of our position. We know the view of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and we want to know the views of the other members of the Government. Is this done from electioneering motives, or from the motives suggested by the hon. Member opposite? May we have another reversion in the next year or two in the opposite sense? These are questions to which we have had no answer.

I think we are entitled, when reviewing the fiscal policy of the country, to know whether the decision is to be a final and permanent expression of the mind of the House. Now the Chancellor of the Exchequer has repeated the arguments which were used last year on these benches against the tax. I will not repeat them. I am quite content to leave them as they were left by the right hon. Gentleman. But a remark fell from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bristol which seemed to me to be very important. He said that circumstances have changed since this tax was passed last year. They have changed. A good deal has happened since then of supreme importance to the issue before the House. May I call the attention of the House to some of those things which have happened since the month of June last year. In the first place there was the Colonial Conference. I remember it was indicated last year by my right hon. friend the Member for the Montrose Burghs, by my right hon. friend the Member for the Stirling Burghs, and by myself, that one of the reasons why we thought the corn tax, or any food tax, was a dangerous tax, was because it would immediately hold out the prospect of the colonies asking preferences for themselves. That was discussed at great length, and really one of the strongest arguments we ventured to put before the House then, was that the tax would give the food-growing colonies an opportunity of asking some benefit to themselves. Now that immediately happened. The Colonial Conference was held about a month after the tax was imposed, and, as we all know, at the Conference Canada asked a preference for food supplies, and in somewhat general terms the demand was supported by the other colonies. I will not discuss, after your ruling, whether that was a good thing or not; that would carry me beyond the lines you have laid down. But it is important that we should remember that it is the natural result of having a tax on food. So far this country stood on the principle not to tax food at all, and it was the answer that could be given to any demand made by the colonies. We stood on the broad basis that for this country it was a matter of supreme importance to have the food of the workers cheap, and, having regard to that vital principle, that we should not enter on the consideration of preferential tariffs with them. But we have taxed food, and why should we not give them a preference. I think it is most dangerous to raise any expectation of that kind on the part of the colonies, and any Minister who, knowing how delicate is the position in which the colonies stand to us, goes out of his way to tempt the colonies in a matter of this kind, incurs a grave and serious responsibility.

A sufficient reason to us against the tax is that it will lead to proposals of that kind, and if we continue to allow such expectations to be raised we shall be drawn into a system which would land us in fiscal confusion, which would deprive us of fiscal freedom, and which, instead of consolidating, would tend to the disintegration of the British Empire. Another thing has happened since this time last year. Last year it was easy to give protection, but it was hard to stop it. There is no microbe so dangerous as the microbe of a protective tariff. It is like a moth in the thread of a garment. It spreads continually from one to another until you have it covered like a network. This is what has happened in Germany, France, and the United States; and if we impose a tax on corn, how are we to resist the demand to impose a tax on meat? If we are to give protection to the colony which produces corn, why not to the colonies which produce wine, tobacco, timber, or raw material like wool. Vested interests soon grow up which make it exceedingly difficult to recede from any protective tariffs you impose. We have heard even now, in regard to this comparatively small tax which was introduced by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol as being non-protective in its character, that the millers have come to the Government and demanded, on the ground of their vested interest, that it should not be taken off. The stronger the vested interests become the more they form combinations with one another until at last the interests of the people are overborne by the combined interests of selfish grades. When this tax was proposed last year the question of raising the price of food was dealt with chiefly as it concerned the producer. The argument of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol was that the food of the people would not become appreciably dearer. Now we have another argument brought forward. It is now admitted by the Colonial Secretary that the price of food will rise and that wages will rise in like proportion.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Though the right hon. Gentleman is in order in discussing the effect of taxation on food, he is not entitled to go into the general scheme suggested by the Colonial Secretary as to mutual arrangements with the colonies.

Mr. BRYCE: I thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have not the slightest intention of going into the question of preferential tariffs. I wish to confine myself entirely to the question of taxation on food. If it be true that a tax on food is followed by a rise in wages, one of the strongest arguments against the taxing of food is removed Those who argue that a tax on food will be followed by a rise in wages are giving powerful support to the Amendment. Therefore I am entit'ed to argue on the contrary that no evidence has been adduced to show that a rise in the price of food will be accompanied by a rise in wages, and there is no ground for believing that this will be so. That is an argument which I think is strictly relevant to the question before the House. What ground is there for believing that a rise in the price of food will be accompanied by a rise in wages? No argument has been given. I want to put to hon. Members what I believe is the only ground on which it can be maintained that a tax on food will be accompanied by a rise in wages. If you can imagine a country standing alone in the world where the workers work at a starvation wage and where the manufacturers are not exposed to the competition of other countries, I admit that a rise in price of food will be accompanied by a rise in wages. It is perfectly clear that if they spend more in paying for food they will have to get larger wages or they will go to the ground altogether. That is the one kernel of truth which supports the view that a rise in the price of food will be accompanied by a rise in wages. But the case before us is totally different. In this country our people are not working at starvation wages, and the country is exposed to competition. If the manufacturer therefore is obliged to pay higher wages he will, in many branches of trade, be unable to make a profit as against foreign rivals. Therefore I say that, so far as logic and reason go, there is not the slightest ground for believing that in a country like England a rise in the price of food will necessarily be accompanied by a rise in wages. I think the argument is entirely the other way, and it rests with those who advance this startling proposition, which is opposed to the doctrine of the best economists, to prove that proposition. We have some experience in this matter. There was a time in this country when food was heavily taxed. Wages were far lower then than now [An Hon. Member "Oh! oh!"] I will be glad if the hon. Gentleman who says "Oh! oh!" will refute the argument. Does the hon. Gentleman deny that wages were lower before 1846? Let us look abroad. We are told to look at Germany. We are told that protection there has had the effect of raising wages. Wages in Germany are much lower than in this country; and as to high wages in the United States, protection has nothing to do with them. They are due to the excess of the demand for labour over the supply; and what is most remarkable in the United States is that food is free and cheap. The prosperity of the United States is therefore a testimony to free trade rather than protection.

I do not pretend that free trade is an axiomatic truth. Every proposition in politics is open to free discussion in the light of the changing circumstances of the time. I appeal, not to the venerable memories of Cobden and Bright, but to reason and common sense. I say that the more you interrogate reason and common sense and experience the stronger will your conviction be that the prosperity of this country has been largely due to free trade. It is by cheap raw material and cheap food that the condition of the working class has been improved, that our manufacturing industries have been built up, and that our shipping has become larger than that of the rest of the world. Therefore, believing that the great source of our commercial prosperity is to be found in those principles, and in the experience of the last fifty years, I should hope that we shall have on this occasion, on this vital issue, a very weighty, and, I would venture to say, an almost unanimous deliverance from this House. I have tried to state the new features of the situation which give the debate on the Budget of this year an even greater importance than the debate of last July. But there is one other point that increases that importance. It is the attitude taken up by the Government. I do not want to say much about the attitude of the Government, because I do not want to bring anything of a Party element into the discussion of an issue which is of such enormous importance. I do not want to say anything more as to the position of the Government than was said by nearly every hon. Member opposite, and above all by the hon. Member for Cambridge University, who has stated the case with perfectly crushing force. He has said that the position is impossible. Then the hon. Member for St. Albans asked what is the Cabinet at? I will not speculate further, but where you cannot explain the conduct of a body of men by any principles, you must explain it by persons. I can only suppose that there have arisen differences of opinion which obliged members of the Cabinet to hold directly opposite positions. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in those words which he read out from the Table with so much emphasis, told us not only what was his own mind, but that the Cabinet to which he belongs had no collective mind at all. There seems to have been an arrangement that everyone is to go as he pleases; but there is to be an agreement only as to the desirability of an inquiry. I should like to know when this inquiry is to be begun? How long is it to last? Who is to conduct the inquiry? Is it to be by a Royal Commission, or a Select Committee of this House or what? I should have thought that the inquiry, if conducted at all, ought to have been conducted in the first instance by the Cabinet themselves, and in the next place by the grand inquest of the nation. But, if we cannot have the collective mind of the Cabinet, the next best thing to have is the mind of each individual member of the Cabinet.

The Government, so far as we can perceive, appear to be irreconcilably divided. They are divided not upon small matters, those little differences of opinion in the Cabinet which are settled by compromise, but divided on a question which goes to the very foundation and roots of our whole fiscal system, I go farther and say that it goes to the reconstitution even of the Empire itself. I think that that is not only an unprecedented thing, but a very dangerous position. It is a position which cannot last. We must go forward. Out of the impenetrable gloom which covers the Treasury Bench there rises a spectre of a change which threatens the existence of the country, which disquiets every trader and manufacturer, which has already disquieted not only the colonies but foreign countries, and which will leave us no peace until some settlement of it is reached. Upon the question of the corn tax there is, so far as we know at present, an irreconcilable difference of opinion between members of the Government, and I venture to believe that when our proceedings of to-day are read in the newspapers to-morrow, there will be a sense of amazement over the whole of the country. Whatever we may hear to-day, and whatever difficulties in which we may be placed by our own rules and forms of procedure in discussing this enormous question, I think that the country will insist on knowing what the mind of the Government is, and whether the Government has any mind at all.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. ELLIOT, Durham): The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has been engaged in struggling with a spectre conjured up by his imagination. I will not enter into that struggle, but confine myself to dealing with the four corners of the Bill before the House which, by the consent of every part of the House, contains the collective mind of the Government of which the right hon. Gentleman has been in search. This is a Bill of extreme simplicity; it is a Bill of extreme straight-forwardness. Hon. Members may be amused with that description of the Bill, but it is a character that might better be applied to it than to some of the past Budgets laid before Parliament. Look at the position in which the country finds itself. We have only just emerged from a great war in which we have been pouring out money like water, piling up taxes, and borrowing money in order to achieve that which, I think, was the object of every man in this country, victory for our arms, and success for our policy. That was the position we were in a year ago; what is our position now? By that expenditure we have achieved a victorious peace, we are now no longer pouring out money like water, we are not now in want of money, not engaged in borrowing money; we are not now spending the Sinking Fund for paying off our debt; we are no longer searching for every source of revenue; we are engaged in relieving the burden of the Income Tax and in making reductions in the indirect taxation which falls so heavily on the people. We have heard to-night some interesting and able speeches in support of the Government and the Second Reading of the Government Bill from this side of the House. I am particularly alluding to the speeches of my right hon. friend the Member for the University of Cambridge and the hon. Member for the Toxteth Division of Liverpool. These speeches were made strongly in favour of the Bill. But I heard also some hon. Members on my own side of the House talking in a desponding and deprecating manner of the difficulty in which they are placed, because they find that they are supporting this year a different Bill from that which they supported last year. I do not know that I am more thick-skinned than other people, but I have not found myself in any difficulty in that respect. The line I took last year is the line on which I take my stand to-day. I described myself as a free trader, and I supported the Bill of last year as a free trader, but a free trader in want of revenue. We are paying off our debt, we have ceased to borrow, and I may say that a man who will not take a Budget in accordance with the facts of the day is no statesman at all, and does not deserve to be weighed in comparison with those who in the past arranged the financial system of the country. As a private Member, and as a free trader, I supported the Bill of last year, because it would draw revenue from all classes of the community, and the fact that it did so was a recommendation to me. To-day the position is changed, and we are taking off taxation so as to relieve the pressure on the poorer classes of the people. In supporting the corn tax last year I expressly disassociated myself from the attitude of my right hon. friends the Members for Sleaford and the Isle of Thanet, who are avowed protectionists.

MR. CHAPLIN: May I be permitted to state that when I supported the imposition of the tax last year I did so on the ground, which I repeated over and over again, of revenue, and not as a protectionist.

MR. ELLIOT: I am well aware that my right hon. friends were last year lying very low; but a change has now taken place, and though I was able then almost to disregard the voices of the protectionists, I confess that I think we are living to-day in a somewhat different atmosphere, and that it behoves all those who agree with my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the right hon. Member for Cambridge University, and the hon. Member for Toxteth Division of Liverpool, not to be ashamed of our free trade colours. We support this Budget, not only as representing the convictions of the Government, but because they are our own personal convictions as to the course we ought to pursue in regard to this year's finance. There is every reason for considering that the line taken by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer a year ago was the right line, and to expect that this almost imperceptible duty would fall into the position of the old registration duty. But the position is not quite the same now. We have to look at the state of the case with which we have to deal. Gentlemen who were very quiet a year ago when they sat below the Gangway are far less quiet now. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford has stated that a shilling duty does not make much difference, but that you might increase it to four, or five shillings.

MR. CHAPLIN: I beg pardon. I said nothing of the kind. The statement is absolutely incorrect in every particular. I am sure the hon. Gentleman does not wish to misrepresent me. What I did say was that I believed that if the tax remained on, in the course of time the small addition which the Colonial Secretary proposed the other night of 2s. might have been added without making the slightest difference.

MR. ELLIOT: I heard the right hon. Gentleman with my own ears; and I am within the recollection of the House. I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that the matter had been looked into, and if even 4s. or 5s. a quarter had been asked——

MR. CHAPLIN: Exactly the opposite.

MR. ELLIOT: I am delighted to hear it. I was, however, present at the reception of that deputation which the right hon. Gentleman voiced so admirably, and I can only say that the impression borne in upon my mind was that if I had myself risen on that occasion and proposed a duty of 4s., or 5s., or 10s., I would have been received with acclamation. I do not think that I would have been repudiated by my right hon. friend.

MR. CHAPLIN: I am sorry to appear again, but the hon. Gentleman is making such loose and reckless statements that I am obliged, reluctantly, to intervene once more and contradict what he said. If the hon. Gentleman had made any such proposition I would have repudiated it absolutely. What I said this afternoon was that if a tax of 4s. was imposed it would raise the price of wheat; and that is exactly the opposite of what the hon. Gentleman has put into my mouth.

MR. ELLIOT: I am delighted to learn that my right hon. friend pledged himself to a shilling duty, and never meant to increase it in any way. If the right hon. Gentleman and his friends are not looking to an increase of this duty, why in the world are they so interested in this tax? Why do they advocate and agitate the public in favour of taxation which is to bring them no benefit? My impression is that the reason of the great popularity attaching to the corn tax is the hope that it may lead to something else. Many hon. Gentlemen believe that if we have a protective duty on corn the transition will be easy to other articles, from corn to butter, from butter to cheese, from cheese to bacon, and from bacon to mutton and beef, and then to articles of luxury. I ask hon. Members seriously to consider what this country is to gain or to lose by giving up its position as a country with cheap imports upon food. There are very different reasons for which import duties may be put on. There is the revenue reason, which is a good reason in many cases. The right hon Gentleman taunted us just now with having lately become converts to free trade. I repudiate that.

MR. BRYCE: I said converts to the principles advanced last year.

MR. ELLIOT: I think I have shown how the position this year is a different position to what it was last year. But, Sir, I was saying that although the levying of import duties for the sake of revenue appears to be a perfectly wise step, to levy them for the sake of keeping out commodities was a very different thing.

MR. BRYCE: Or for the sake of giving preferences.

MR. ELLIOT: I rejoice in the free trade position which this country has held for so many years past. It is a great and grand ideal that under the British Flag, wherever the Home Government has control, wherever in the United Kingdom, India, Gibraltar, Malta, or Hong-Kong, go where you will, the British subject of whatever colour he may be, can buy his commodities at the market price. The market is under the Union Jack, and wherever it is under the control of the Home Government it is a free market. That is a thing to be proud of, and I say it would be a mighty change if for that position we substitute another into which artificial considerations might enter and lose the free markets and privileges we now enjoy.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: Where do we enjoy a free market?

MR. ELLIOT: A free market is a market to which everything may come free.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: Where is that free market?

MR. ELLIOT: I do not understand my hon. friend's interruption. He must know that I referred to India, Hong-Kong, Malta, and the Crown-Colonies. It is fighting against facts to maintain that it is not so. I am now stating facts, and it would be a considerable loss to this country if we gave up that ideal and substituted something else for the free markets that exist in the United Kingdom, India, and our Crown Colonies. The great bulk of the corn that comes into this country, and under the present system is taxed to the extent of one shilling per quarter, comes from our fellow-subjects in Canada and other British colonies. I want to point out what the state of things really is. So far as the British colonies are concerned it was free, but now toll bars have been set up for revenue purposes. About £2,500,000 was raised last year under this one shilling per quarter duty, and of that no less than £400,000 odd, in fact nearly £500,000, came from our British colonies. I do not know that I am concerned in knowing very elaborately who pays the tax. In the long run a very large proportion falls on the consumer. I should not like to say the whole of it does, but there is £500,000 paid into the British Exchequer. That money does not "drop like the gentle dew from heaven." It comes out of the unwilling pockets of British citizens, and that is due to the toll bars which have been set up on the great ocean routes which would otherwise be free to productions for the British markets. It would be serious indeed if we made this system a matter of permanent policy, and in order to favour this land or that nationality, we made a great change and toll bars were to be erected on the great ocean routes of commerce.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member is now dealing with a subject outside the question before the House.

MR. ELLIOT: I admit, Sir, I was going too far, but my point is that no less than nearly £500,000 raised under the Act we are pressing to repeal is contributed between the British colonies and our own kingdom. I yield to no one in my desire to promote, not only the prosperity and wealth of the kingdom, which means the wealth of the people, but the prosperity and unity of the Empire. This is, however, rather beyond my text. I should like to say one or two words about the position taken up by my right hon. friend behind me. There was some talk of an inquiry, but the idea was never entertained of a wild, roving inquiry, such as has been mentioned in the course of the discussion. I imagine that what is contemplated is such an inquiry as is now taking place, and the more inquiry of that kind the better. I should like to associate myself humbly with the prophecy of my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. My right hon. friend stood there, and, looking forward into the future, said he felt that the more public inquiry there was the more the public would find that one of the main causes of the prosperity and power of this country lay in the fact that food and raw materials must remain cheap. That is the present view of the Government;

and the more that the people inquire into this matter, the more they will find that the system advocated by Sir Robert Peel cannot lightly be dismissed as of no account. I repeat that is the policy of the Government; it is the policy strongly recommended to the public and to the House, and I believe that the more it is considered by the country, the more the country will feel that the Government have placed an honest, straightforward, simple, and sound financial measure before the House of Commons, and I cannot doubt that it will be passed by an enormous majority.

MR. ROBSON (South Shields): I do not hope to controvert any of the arguments to which the House has just listened with pleasure, and, I hope, with profit. The speech we have just heard was, I observe, delivered from the Front Bench. It was delivered from opposite this box, which is supposed to indicate a position of authority, and to indicate that the speaker has behind him the opinion and authority of the Government that he represents. We are entitled to know if that is the case with the speech to which we have just listened. I am not going to travel so far as the hon. Gentleman did into subjects of discussion that may possibly be beyond the scope of the matter before the House. I am going to confine my remarks entirely to the question of the shilling duty on corn, and I do not propose to go beyond that limit. But within that limit we are entitled to know what is the mind of the Government with regard to the tax they are proposing to take off. Are they proposing to take it off in order that, a short time after, they may reimpose it? We are entitled to have that in clear terms from the head of the Government. If it is to be taken off in order that it may be subsequently reimposed, I say that we are wasting our time, and that the Government is trifling with the country. If, on the other hand, it is the intention of the Government, as represented by the Prime Minister's speech, to alter the fiscal policy of the country, we ought to have a statement by the head of the Government. A few weeks ago the head of the Government made a speech entirely in consonance with that to which we have just listened. The Prime Minister said then that this tax should not be made a part of the permanent fiscal system of the country. It is unnecessary to enter into the reasons. He said it could not be made part of the permanent system, and no one believed that it could. But at the very time that the right hon. Gentleman was delivering this speech another speech was being delivered elsewhere which indicated that this tax, or something even larger, might and ought to be made part of the permanent fiscal system of the country. That speech coming from the Colonial Secretary was one which the Prime Minister, if he had had any regard for consistency or discipline, would have repudiated, or at all events would at once have said whether he agreed or disagreed with it. But the right hon. Gentleman has taken a different attitude. He has succumbed to the Colonial Secretary. Neither the Prime Minister nor the Colonial Secretary are now in the House. It would be presumption for me to say what is the duty of these right hon. Gentlemen to the House, or whether their absence during such an important debate as this is quite respectful to the House. But as a Member of the House I am entitled to say that these right hon. Gentlemen ought to be present and to state their views on the questions at issue before we proceed to a division.

We want to know with regard to this shilling per quarter corn tax whether it is going to be reimposed as part of a larger and wider policy. If so, let the Prime Minister tell us at once, because we are entitled to know. But apparently the Government have not made up their minds. The Colonial Secretary a few nights ago in this House told us he was prepared to go into the cottages of the working classes and explain how much his scheme would add to the cost of living. He was prepared to assume that not merely a part, but the whole burden fell on the consumer, and he was prepared to say how much their wages must be raised in order to meet that increased cost. The Colonial Secretary appears to have now taken a somewhat different view. He told us that this tax laid nothing whatever on the back of the consumer, and that it added nothing to the price. We are entitled to ask him and the Prime Minister whether they maintain the Colonial Secretary's view of three weeks ago, and what they now think is the effect of the shilling per quarter tax on corn. At all events, I maintain that they ought to be here and state their views. I hope they are not going to allow the division to take place without telling us whether they hold the views of three weeks ago, of a fortnight, or a week ago, or whether they have now discovered some new views. I think the House had better vote on the view that the tax will be reimposed. We are entitled to assume that there is a party in the Government strong enough to commit the Government to which they belong to the reimposition of this tax. But whether we vote for or against the tax there is still the larger question to be decided, and we want the Government to help us. I am not curious to know the collective mind of the Cabinet. I want to know the mind of the Prime Minister. The difficulties we feel on this subject have not been cleared up by the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman spoke to-night in a dual capacity. First he spoke as the Chancellor of the Exchequer and then he spoke as himself. I listened to him with keen attention, and tried very hard to find out when the Chancellor of the Exchequer ceased to speak and when the right hon. Gentleman began as a private Member. I found it exceedingly difficult to draw the dividing line. The right hon. Gentleman condemned preferential tariffs. He condemned those tariffs, and spoke freely and frankly in favour of free trade. Was that the mind of the Government? Was the Chancellor of the Exchequer speaking for the Government, or was he, as an estimable private Member, giving expression to an academic opinion of his own? Which was it? We do not at this moment know what is the policy of the Government, and I submit that we ought not to be kept in ignorance of that policy any longer.

*MR. RENWICK (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Cambridge University, I would like to point out, voted for the corn tax as a member of the Government a year ago, and he certainly did not then make such a speech as that to which we have just listened. If it be the fact, as he stated, that so many of the wage-earning classes are on the verge of starvation, surely that in itself is a reason for reconsidering our fiscal policy and of endeavouring to find some means of raising their status. I understand the right hon. Gentleman bases his statement with regard to so many of the wage-earners of this country being on the verge of starvation on extracts from books written by Mr. Rowntree and Mr. Booth; and I certainly think it is our duty, in view of those statements, to examine our fiscal policy. I should like to hear the opinions of the representative working men, who I see opposite, on this question. We have had one important admission from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Aberdeen, to the effect that, in the consideration of proposals for the modification of our fiscal policy, it is no longer a heresy to call in question the policy promoted by Cobden, Bright, and other prominent free traders. If any of us had ventured to raise this question not very long ago we certainly should not have been met with that admission.

I now wish to say a few words with regard to the Amendment before the House. We have been told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister that the corn tax was imposed on grounds of expediency, and not in opposition to the principles of free trade. I remember when it was proposed last year I made a speech in regard to it, and I ventured to say that the working men of this country would not trouble themselves with wire-drawn arguments as to whether it was protective or non-protective, but that they would simply consider the question of its expediency. I myself supported the tax on the ground of expediency, and I must say I have heard no sufficient reason addressed to us at the present time why it should be removed. But I would remind the House of one other reason why it ought not to be repealed. At the present time there is in existence a Royal Commission which has been appointed to inquire into our national food supplies in time of war, and it may be that it may report in favour of placing a tax on imported corn, in order to encourage the growth of wheat in this country; in that case it would become necessary for us to reimpose the duty. Seeing that not more than twelve months have elapsed since it was decided to impose this duty, I certainly cannot understand why this proposal should have been made to remove it, especially in view of the recently expressed policy and opinions of the Colonial Minister, of which I cannot believe the right hon. Gentleman's colleagues were entirely in ignorance. Personally, I have no hesitation in saying that I should prefer a reduction of the duty on tea to the abolition of the corn duty, and I will briefly state my reasons why. We have heard from the Financial Secretary that India is the principal free market from which we draw our supply of tea. What do we do in return for this great boon? We impose a tax of 6d. per lb. upon the tea. We have been told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the increase of the tea duty by 2d. only raised the price of tea to the consumer ½d. per lb., and if that be so, it means that the Indian planters are getting 1½d. per lb. less for their tea than they did before the extra 2d. was added to the duty. That fact alone, I think, is a reason why we should gracefully remit the 2d. now that we have an opportunity of doing so. It has been estimated that every person in this country pays 3s. per annum in the form of duty on tea, while the duty on imported wheat and flour works out at about 7d. per head per annum. Therefore, if we reduce the tea duty by 2d. per lb. we shall confer a greater general benefit than by removing the corn duty, and that is the reason why I, for one, would prefer a reduction of the duty on tea. Whereas, formerly, we imported the bulk of our tea from China, the position has been reversed, and we now get it mainly from our own dependencies, of India and Ceylon. I believe that it is upon the tea-planters themselves that the burden falls.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has told us that as a result of the imposition of the shilling duty on corn the price of American wheat has been increased from 30s. 3d. to 33s. per quarter. But I dispute this because I find that Californian wheat is now quoted at 31s. 3d. or 31s. 6d. and Argentine 28s. 6d., while Manitoba wheat, which I presume is also considered American, is only 29s. 6d., and other North American wheats only 29s. I therefore cannot see on what the right hon. Gentleman bases his statement that American wheat has gone up to 33s. on account of the duty. As a matter of fact the prices now are practically the same as they were in June, 1900, 1901, 1902, but there has been a large variation in the cost of freightage. In 1900 the freightage from New York and other North American ports worked out at 3s. 9d. per quarter; a year later it was 2s. 9d.; in 1902 it was 2s. 3d., and in 1903 it was 1s. 9d. I may be told that that variation is attributable to the corn duty. But I should like to call attention to the freightages from the Argentine Republic. In 1900 they worked out at 5s. 4d., in 1901 they had fallen to 3s. 9d., and in 1902, after the shilling duty had been imposed, they were 2s. 6d. But it is a remarkable fact that at the present moment they work out at 4s. 6d per quarter. What does that prove? It proves that the foreigner who has wheat to send here does not grow it for the purpose of sending it to this country. His first object is to supply his home market, and he only sends us the surplus and takes whatever he can get for it. If that be not so why should he now be willing to pay 4s. 6d. for freightage when only a year ago he paid but 2s. 6d. The fact is he has to pay whatever the shipowner can enforce, and to take whatever price he can get for his produce. When there is a large surplus of wheat in America, and when the prices ruling for that wheat are low, freights are often high, therefore I believe for one that the foreigner has had to pay the 1s. duty and not the home consumer. Bearing all these facts in mind, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that I should prefer a reduction of the tea duty by 2d. to the repeal of the corn duty. We have been told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that we are going to repeal the duty because it laid us open to so much misrepresentation. I say we ought to take a higher view than that, and we ought to do that which is best for the country, and for the good of the Empire.

We were also told that if the big loaf and the little loaf were accurately pictured, it would require a microscope to see the difference between them. I have taken part in one or two by-elections since the tax was put on. I remember particularly the Devonport election; and I saw carried through the streets there a great loaf labelled the Radical loaf, and an extremely small loaf labelled the Tory loaf. So small was the Tory loaf that it almost required a microscope to see it. Yet we won that election in spite of misrepresentation. We know very well that whatever measure is brought in by the Government, it will be misrepresented by the other side; and I am surprised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should have adduced such a reason for the repeal of the tax as that it was liable to misrepresentation. I believe that during the next six months we will hear considerably more of this question, and that before the controversy is over many who are now in favour of the repeal of the tax will come round to the view that it would be much better to reduce the duty on tea.

Mr. CROOKS (Woolwich): It is perfectly true that I interrupted the hon. Gentleman with the remark that his argument as to freight proved absolutely nothing. I repeat the statement, because if his argument is worth anything at all, shipowners, knowing that there was a surplus stock on the other side, would offer to bring it to this side for 2s. 6d. when there was no particular demand; but like every other commercial man, they tried to make the best profit they could, and asked 4s. 6d., and got it. The Colonial Secretary asks if people think that when the rich are taxed the poor escape. "No," says the right hon. Gentleman, "the bottom man will always pay." It seems to me that there must be something wrong with my education. I cannot believe that this is such an infinitesimal matter. Hon. Members do not seem to realise that there are retailers who will seize every opportunity to raise the price. If you are able to say that the poor will get the article at its real price, well and good. I remember when 6d. per gallon was put on spirits, a penny per quartern was put on the spirits retailed in the public-houses. Does the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford realise that the bakers will say, "Oh, the Government have put a shilling duty on corn; therefore, we must raise the price of the loaf by a halfpenny." It will give everyone an opportunity of making a little more out of the poor. In a word, we furnish traders with an excuse; and I want to deprive them of that excuse. Is the House agreed that this is such a small matter, so unimportant, that it really means nothing in particular. I only wish some hon. Members could change places with some of the English housewives, and see what a difference a penny or twopence a week means to them. It sometimes means the difference of having or going without. I am told that all you have to do is to raise the price of commodities and tell the working man that the more he pays for his food the more wages he will get.

If the Government went to the country on a question like that, they would get an answer which would surprise them. Personally, I congratulate the Chancellor of the Exchequer on having the courage to take off this tax; but we do not know where we are, or what is going to happen. We have had an exhibition in the House to-day the like of which I am told has no parallel in history. Two great speeches have been made on the fiscal policy of this country. When I am told that this wonderful scheme will be so profitable that we are to have old-age pensions, I ask where the House is drifting to. Was not the income of last year sufficient to meet the needs of the Government? Now we are going to take the duty off corn and to relieve the Income Tax-payers of about £10,000,000. My answer is that I do not know of any better use that can be made of the surplus we now have than by giving old-age pensions straight away. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer finds himself with a surplus, instead of getting up and suggesting that now at last there is an opportunity of fulfilling the pledges which were given to the country, without any increase in the burden of taxation, and of meeting a large portion of the demand for old-age pensions, he starts another hare which we are to chase. That has happened over and over again. Whenever the country is alive to the need of some social or domestic reform a new cry is started. A kite is sent up and then the Government watch what is going to happen. I think the hon. Gentleman the Member for Northampton was right when he described this new scheme as a rotten red herring. We have all got our particular metaphors. It seems to me that any sort of thing is good enough for the Government as long as it takes the mind of the people away from the object they have in view. I make this appeal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer: Take this corn tax off, but keep the Income Tax on. In that way he will be able to meet a very large proportion of the demand of the working-classes of this country for old-age pensions. I regret that the Rules of the House will not permit me to move the Amendment I proposed to move; but I hope the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford will be defeated, and that we shall have a statement from the Treasury Bench as to whether we are to have another inquiry. I do not believe that any hon. Member wants an inquiry except for the purpose of postponing the matter. We are convinced that the right thing is free trade, and the people should not be put off with an inquiry.

MAJOR SEELY (Isle of Wight): I have listened to the whole of this debate, and nearly every hon. Member who has spoken has asked the same question. I do not wonder at it. As I understand the position, we are now all agreed that this duty on corn was not imposed as a protective tax. At the same time, we are agreed that there are persons in this House who think that it would be advisable that protective taxes, of which this is one, should be maintained, and possibly increased; and we have also had brought to our notice in the course of this debate that one of the most prominent, if not the most prominent member of this Government is in favour, not only of retaining this tax, but increasing it. Every hon. Member, therefore, in these circumstances asks what is going to be done; and as a very humble Member of this House I say it is trifling with the House as a deliberative assembly to ask us to decide as to the taking off of this tax when the one member of the Cabinet who alone can answer the question is not present to tell the House whether they are going to be asked to impose it in a larger form to-morrow. Although I am a free trader and support the views put forward by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I am entirely in sympathy with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford in thinking that this is but scant courtesy to the House, and, therefore, as a protest I beg to move that the debate be now adjourned.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Major Seely.*)

*MR. RITCHIE: The Government had hoped that this debate might have been closed to-night; but, of course, if there is a disposition that it should be carried on to-morrow the Government will not, having regard to the great importance of the question, stand in the way of the adjournment of the debate now. I hope it may be possible to bring it to a conclusion at the afternoon sitting to-morrow, but I do not wish to ask for any pledge on that subject.

Question put, and agreed to.

Debate to be resumed to-morrow.

SUPPLY [8TH JUNE, AFTERNOON SITTING.]

Resolutions reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903–4.

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £563,000, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and expenses of the Customs Department."

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £1,370,500, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and expenses of the Inland Revenue Department."

3. "That a sum, not exceeding £536,790, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1904, for the Expenses of the Post-Office Packet Service."

Resolutions agreed to.

PUBLIC OFFICES (DUBLIN) [ADVANCES].

Resolution reported.

"That it is expedient to authorise the issue, out of the Consolidated Fund, of such sums, not exceeding in the whole £225,000, as may be required for the purposes of any Act of the present session for the acquisition of certain land in Dublin, and for the erection and equipment of a Royal College of Science and other buildings for the public service, and to authorise the Treasury for the purpose of providing for the issue and repayment of such sums to borrow money by means of Terminable Annuities for a period not exceeding thirty years, such annuities to be paid out of moneys to be provided by Parliament for the Service of the Commissioners, and if those moneys are insufficient out of the Consolidated Fund."

Resolution read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

Mr. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) said he did not desire to oppose the Motion; but he wished to call attention to the fact that it was for the purpose of providing a sum of £255,000 for a College of Science in Dublin. He did not object to Dublin having a College of Science out of Imperial money, but he desired to direct attention to the fact that hitherto the principle was that each country should have a grant equivalent to what was taken out of the Imperial purse for another country. They had a College of Science in Glasgow which was built entirely out of local money, no grant being obtained from the Imperial purse in respect of it. Before the principle of the equivalent grant was introduced by Mr. Goschen, each country dipped into the Imperial purse, and in that way no particular account was kept in order to see that each country had its proper share. To get rid of that, it was proposed that each country should get a certain proportion of what either of the other countries got. Scotland was limited entirely to its equivalent grants. It did not get any money for any special purpose, such as a College of Science. He was not going to stand in the way of Dublin getting this money; but, at the same time, he thought he was justified in pointing to the fact that Scotland did not get any special grants.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Perthshire, E.) said that the Government proposed to meet this expenditure, not out of the ordinary Estimates of the year, but by borrowed money, to be repaid by a series of terminable annuities. As he pointed out the other day, this was an extension of the bad principle which was in vogue during the last ten years in a sphere in which it had not previously been applied. The defence set up when the matter came before the House on the Naval Works Bill was that the Government was justified in adopting the principle where large public works were concerned, but would not be justified in the case of small public works. The subject of the motion was a comparatively small work, and the motion itself constituted a distinct innovation of the previous practice of the House.

And, it being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed this day.

MILITARY LANDS BILL.

Read a second time, and committed for this day.

Adjourned at three minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 10*th June*, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

London Hydraulic Power Bill. Lords' Amendment considered, and agreed to.

All Saints, Poplar (Rate Abolition), Bill [Lords]. Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

Middlesbrough Corporation Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Exeter Railway Bill [Lords]. Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

Lanarkshire and Dumbartonshire Railway Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Lima Railway Bill [Lords]. Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

South Yorkshire Joint Railways Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Dover Corporation Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Knott End Railway (Extension of Time) Bill [Lords]. [Not amended], considered; to be read the third time.

Merthyr Tydfil Urban District Council Bill; Wigan Corporation Tramways Bill; Western Valleys (Monmouthshire) Sewerage Board Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Belfast Water Bill [Lords] (by Order). Read a second time, and committed.

Forth Navigation Order Confirmation Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Caledonian Railway Order Confirmation Bill; Edinburgh Corporation (Markets, Slaughter Houses, etc.) Order Confirmation Bill; Grangemouth Water Order Confirmation Bill; Lanarkshire Electricity and Refuse Destruction Order Confirmation Bill. Read a second time; to be considered upon Friday.

Broughty Ferry Gas Provisional Order Bill; Hamilton Burgh Provisional Order Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 17) Bill; Local Government Provisional Order (No. 18) Bill; Military Lands Provisional Orders Bill. Read a second time, and committed.

PETITIONS.

BURGH POLICE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Midlothian, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.

Petitions against: from Willesden; Brentwood; Northchurch; Ashley Green; and Berkhamsted St. Peter; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY COUNCILS (BILLS IN PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Petition from Midlothian, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petition from Chester, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Old Monkland, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Old Monkland; Aberdeen; and Leith; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL, AND LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.

Petition from Penzance, against; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petitions for alteration: from Ballater; Selkirk (two); Aberdeen; and Leith; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Aberdeen, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petitions against (praying to be heard by Counsel): from Merchants, Traders, and others carrying on business on the banks of the River Medway; Urban District Council of Gillingham; Conservators of the River Medway; Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors of the City of Westminster; Holders of Debenture Stock of the Millwall Dock Company; Maidstone Corporation; Company of Proprietors of the Lower Navigation of the River Medway; London and North Western Railway Company; Railway Companies' Association; Trustees of the Royal Liver Friendly Society; London and India Docks Company; Urban District Council of Tonbridge; Holders of Debenture Stock and Mortgage Debentures of the London and India Docks Company; London County Council; Merchants, Traders, and others carrying on business in the district of Maidstone and Tonbridge and other places on the River Medway; Coal Factors Society; Millwall Dock Company; and Woolwich Borough Council; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill.

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Southampton; London Road; Broomhill; Wirksworth; Winnington; New Brompton; and Selkirk; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HOUSES (HOURS OF CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Edinburgh; and Glasgow; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.

Petition from Aberdeen, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

SHEEP SCAB BILL.

Petition from Aberdeen, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES (IRELAND).

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 16th March — *Mr. Thomas O'Donnell*]; to lie upon the Table.

LUNATIC ASYLUMS (IRELAND).

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 26th March—*Mr. Clancy*]; to lie upon the Table.

UGANDA RAILWAY ACTS, 1896 AND 1900.

Account presented, showing the money issued from the Consolidated Fund under the provisions of the Uganda Railway Acts, 1896 (59 and 60 Vic., c. 38), and 1900 (63 and 64 Vic., c. 11), and of the Money expended and borrowed, and Securities created under the said Act, to 31st March, 1902, together with the Report of the Comptroller, and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 196.]

WAGES AND PROFITS IN COAL MINING.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 5th May—*Mr. Joseph Walton*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 197.]

AFRICA (No. 5, 1903.)

Copy presented, of Return giving Dates of Purchase and Prices paid for Rails, Sleepers, Girders, Locomotives, Carriages, and Bridge Work obtained for the construction and working of the Uganda Railway [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE OF BRITISH POSSESSIONS.

Copy presented, of Statement of the Value of the Trade of the various British Colonies and Possessions with the United Kingdom, other British Possessions, and Foreign Countries during the year 1901 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Motor-Car Accidents.

Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the President of the Local Government Board, if he will state how many motor-car accidents resulting in injury to individuals have occurred in the provinces since 1st April, and will he say how many of these accidents have proved fatal.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) I am afraid I have no information which would enable me to give the particulars desired by the hon. Member.

Speed of Motor-Cars.

Mr. WEIR: To ask the President of the Local Government Board, whether his attention has been called to a motor-car accident at East Tisted, near Alton, on the 25th ultimo, when a flock of sheep was run into and the shepherd sustained a fractured leg; and will he say whether the local authorities have any instructions from the Local Government Board to enforce the law with regard to the speed of motor-cars.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) I have not seen any report of the accident to which the hon. Member refers. The enforcement of the law with regard to the speed of motor-cars is ordinarily a matter for the police. The local authorities have received no instructions from my Department on the subject.

Theft of Postal Orders from Glasgow Post Office.

Sir J. STIRLING-MAXWELL (Glasgow, College): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that postal orders to the amount of £19 13s. 3½d. were stolen in a Glasgow post office from letters addressed to Messrs. Ogg Brothers of Glasgow, and that the man suspected of the theft, though acquitted on a test case in a Court of law, has been dismissed from the service of the Post Office; and, if so, will he arrange that the money stolen will be refunded to Messrs. Ogg Brothers.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) I am aware of the case mentioned. In the case of the postal orders which were used to remit the greater part of the amount lost, the remitters did not comply with the regulation which requires the person to whom an order is issued to fill in the name of the payee, and the loss of the amount of the orders is attributable to the neglect of this precaution. In certain other cases, in which the remitters filled in the name of the payees, the orders were not negotiated, and their amount has been paid to Messrs. Ogg Brothers by means of duplicate orders. I regret that I am unable to make good the amount of the remittances referred to in the Question, but where the senders of postal orders neglect the very obvious precautions which are enjoined by the regulations, I see no reason for indemnifying them at the expense of the public.

Improved Mail Service to Lerwick.

Mr. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): To ask the Postmaster-General if his attention has been called to the fact that the mail service to Lerwick does not meet the requirements of the county; and if he will inquire into the possibility of so arranging the service as to give one extra direct mail weekly from Aberdeen to Lerwick.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) I must call the attention of the hon. Member to the Answer which I gave in the House on the 3rd of March last † to a previous Question of his respecting the mail service to the Shetland Islands. As I then stated, the cost of the existing mail service is so largely in excess of the revenue from the correspondence for the Islands that the additional expenditure which would have to be incurred to provide a more frequent service would not be justifiable on postal grounds.

Excise Administration of Assam.

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether the investigation instituted into the allegations made against the Excise Administration of

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxviii, 1223.

Assam, in the Memorandum issued by Mr. James Buckingham, C.I.E., on behalf of the planters, has been completed; and whether he is now in a position to state the results of the investigation.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) I have no information as to whether the investigation has been completed. The Report which the Government of India are to submit to me on its conclusion has not yet reached me.

Native Labour in the Transvaal Mines—Appointment of Recruiting Agent.

SIR BRAMPTON GURDON (Norfolk, N.): To ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Mr. John Sinderam has been appointed recruiting agent ,at Port Herald, in British Central Africa, for the supply of native labour to the Transvaal mines; and, if so, whether this is the same John Sinderam, of the firm of Walker Brothers and Sinderam, who was prosecuted before Judge Nunan on 9th July, 1900, for gross brutality to natives in the collection of native labour, found guilty, and fined £250.

(*Answered by Lord Cranborne.*) We have no information of such an appointment, but an inquiry will be made.

Ebbw Vale Water Supply.

MR. CHARLES MORLEY (Brecknock): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in view of the fact that under the powers of the Ebbw Vale Council Water Bill it is proposed to take a quantity of water from the catchment basin of the Clydach Stream (Breconshire) without any provision of compensation water being permitted to flow down the natural channel of that river, he will, in the interests of public health, and in view of the character of the Clydach Valley, cause provision to be made in the Bill for the sending of compensation water down the natural course of the Clydach Stream.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) This Bill is at present awaiting Second Reading in another place, and I am informed that a petition is to be presented against it with a view of obtaining the insertion of a provision to the effect desired by the hon. Member. It will be for the Committee by whom the Bill is dealt with to determine whether any provision should be made on the subject.

German Tariff for Canadian Goods.

MR. MOON (St. Pancras, N.: To ask the Secretary to the Board of Trade whether he will give the date and title of the German law, tariff, or other document under which Canadian imports to that country are subjected to duty, and also the text of such part or parts as will show the rate or amount of the duty upon Canadian imports as compared with that upon imports from other countries.

(*Answered by Mr. Bonar Law.*) The existing German tariff is determined by the Customs Tariff Law of the 15th July, 1879, amended by several subsequent laws, and modified by treaties with several Powers as regards the rates on imports from countries enjoying "Most-Favoured-Nation" treatment. Since the termination of the treaty between Great Britain and Germany, the tariff treatment of goods from the British Empire imported into Germany has been regulated by special German legislation. The German law now in force respecting the commercial relations with the British Empire is dated 29th May, 1901, and in virtue of this law the Bundesrath issued a notification, dated 11th June, 1901, according, until further notice, Most-Favoured-Nation treatment to subjects and products of the British Empire with the exception of Canada. Canadian products do not, therefore, enjoy in Germany the reductions of duty conceded by treaty to various Powers, but are subject to the general German tariff.

Promotion of Colonial Commandants.

MR. CATHCART WASON: To ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state if officers who have served as Colonial Commandants have or will receive appointments in higher ranks on their return.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) It is not clear to what class of officers the hon. Member refers, but the question of any perferment of officers in charge of purely colonial forces would naturally rest with the colonial governments concerned.

Porthcawl Rifle Range.

MR. FULLER (Wiltshire, Westbury): To ask the Secretary of State for War what rent is being paid by the War Department for the Porthcawl Rifle Range in Glamorganshire; and whether he can state the number of rifle butts at present available for use upon the range.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The rent paid by the War Department for the Porthcawl Rifle Range is £147 per annum. There are no targets at present available for use upon this range, the construction of which is not yet completed.

Deportation of Prisoners captured in Somaliland.

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will say if the mother-in-law of the so-called Mad Mullah, Jeyunghas, who was captured by His Majesty's forces a few weeks ago, with other prisoners, in Somaliland is so situated as to prevent her making communications to the enemy; and if it is the intention to deport these prisoners to Aden or elsewhere.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) No report of the capture of the Mullah's mother-in-law has reached the War Office, and no proposal has been made by the General Officer Commanding to deport his prisoners to Aden. It may be assumed that the General Officer Commanding does not allow his prisoners to communicate with the enemy.

Government Housing Bill—Date of Introduction.

MR. SHACKLETON (Lancashire, Clitheroe): To ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can now state when it is proposed to introduce the Government Housing Bill.

(*Answered by Mr. A. J. Balfour.*) I am not able at present to fix the actual date for the introduction of this Bill. My right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board answered a Question to this effect on Monday last.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

21st Lancers.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the Court of Inquiry appointed by the Commander-in-Chief to inquire into the recent incidents among the officers of the 21st Lancers, at which questions sent from the War Office and answered by the officers on oath were submitted to the Court of Inquiry, he will state the opinion of the Court of Inquiry upon these questions and the answers thereto.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): No, Sir. The proceedings of Courts of Inquiry are privileged, and I am not prepared to give the information required.

The Accident on the "Good Hope."

SIR WILLIAM ALLAN (Gateshead): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty a Question, of which I have given him private notice—viz., What is the nature of the Belleville boiler explosion on H.M.S. "Good Hope"; how many men were injured thereby; and the extent of their injuries.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W.): According to the information received up to the present time, the accident on the "Good Hope" was due to the giving way of the anchor bolt in one of the elements of the boilers, thus allowing the lower part of the boiler to lift and the steam to escape. I regret to say that Engineer Sub-Lieutenant James Webber, Acting Engine-Room Artificer Russell Rendall, and four stokers were injured. Engine-Room Artificer Rendall and William Devonshire, leading stoker, have since died.

Water-Tube Boilers.

SIR WILLIAM ALLAN: I beg further to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty is the Admiralty aware that the Babcock and Wilcox water-tube boilers in the Allan liners "Buenos Ayrean" and "Siberian" are being removed and Scotch boilers are to be substituted.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: Yes, Sir, the Admiralty are aware that it is the intention of the Allan Line to replace the Babcock and Wilcox boiler fitted in the "Buenos Ayrean" by a cylindrical boiler. There is no Babcock and Wilcox boiler in the "Siberian"

India—Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is in a position to make any statement with regard to the decision arrived at with respect to the extension of Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty in India.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): I have no statement to make on the subject.

Indian Government Rupee Stock.

SIR EDGAR VINCENT (Exeter): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, in view of the fact that dividends on Indian Government Rupee Stock enfaced for payment at the Bank of England are paid by means of drafts in rupees on India, he will consider the advisability of offering to holders of stock the alternative of receiving cash payment in sterling at the rate of exchange of the day, thus saving the investor delay in obtaining his dividends, which now acts as a deterrent to investments in Indian Rupee Stock.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: The matter has been carefully considered. I am informed that the interest drafts on Rupee Stock can be cashed at the current rate of exchange without difficulty or delay in the ordinary course of banking business, and such being the case I see no reason for altering a system which seems to work well and without trouble to the stockholders.

British Indian Subjects in the Transvaal.

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he has received any communication from the Colonial Office or the Indian Government relating to the proposed employment of British Indian subjects in the Transvaal.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: The answer is in the affirmative. The matter is under consideration.

Transvaal Franchise—The New Uitlanders.

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has received any communication from Lord Milner to the effect that his government have introduced an amendment to the draft of the municipal ordinance restricting the right of voting in the Transvaal to British subjects only; and whether, seeing that His Majesty's Government between the years 1896 and 1899 repeatedly protested to the late Boer Government on this same subject, will he say what new factors have arisen which necessitate the present Uitlander population being denied the right to exercise the franchise.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): I have received no communication from Lord Milner on the subject.

MR. MARKHAM: Has the right hon. Gentleman not received any communication to the effect that the Amendment was proposed in the Transvaal Council yesterday.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I have already said that I have received no communication.

Grievances of British Indian Subjects in the Transvaal.

MR. MARKHAM: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will lay upon the Table of the House a copy of the petition addressed to him last month by Mr. Abdool Gani, Chairman of the British Indian Association at Johannesburg, relating to the treatment accorded to British Indian subjects under Lord Milner's administration; and whether, seeing that Mr. Abdool Gani states in this petition that British Indians were never subjected to the physical ill-treatment under the late Boer Government they are now suffering, will he instruct Lord Milner to follow the precedent adopted in 1898 and 1899 by reporting weekly to him on these grievances of Indian subjects.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I have received a resolution passed at a meeting of British Indians at Johannesburg on 6th May, of which Mr. Abdool Gani was chairman. I do not propose to lay it on the Table. This resolution does not refer to physical ill-treatment, and I see no necessity for the proposed instruction. The whole subject is under consideration by the India Office and the Colonial Office, and I am in communication with Lord Milner on the matter.

The Congo—Case of Herr Rabinek.

MR. EMMOTT (Oldham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in view of the statement of His Majesty's Commissioner for British Central Africa that Herr Rabinek was arrested on a British steamer in British waters, he will state what steps they are taking in the matter; and whether, in view of the nature of the offence for which it is stated Herr Rabinek was sentenced, he can state whether the territories of the Congo Free State contiguous to British Central Africa are open to the commercial enterprise of European merchants and native traders established in British territory, according to the stipulations of the Berlin Act.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord CRANBORNE, Rochester): His Majesty's Government are considering what action, if any, it may be advisable for them to take in connection with the arrest of Herr Rabinek. The whole question, however, of freedom of trade within the limits of the Congo State will form part of the communication which is to be made to the signatories of the Berlin Act in accordance with the undertaking given by His Majesty's Government in the House on the 20th ultimo.

Brussels Sugar Commission.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the proceedings before the Brussels Sugar Commission are open to the Press; and, if not, whether a full report will be issued before the Government proceed with the Sugar Convention Bill; whether any particular instructions have been given as to the action of the British delegates in case the Austro-Hungarian allotment system should be condemned by the Commission; and whether, in such an eventuality, it would be possible for this country to withdraw altogether from the Convention.

LORD CRANBORNE: I understand that the proceedings are not public, but that, as at the Brussels Conference, a report will be drawn up by a Committee for communication to the Press. It is impossible to foresee how long the present discussions of the Commission may last, and the Bill now before Parliament must be passed during the present session. No undertaking such as that alluded to could therefore be given. The answer to the last two paragraphs of the Question is in the negative.

MR. LOUGH: Will the noble Lord promise that a full report of the proceedings shall be laid before Parliament as soon as possible?

LORD CRANBORNE: I cannot give that undertaking at this moment.

Self-Governing Colonies and the Brussels Sugar Convention.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade to which self-governing colonies have His Majesty's Government, in fulfilment of their obligation under the Brussels Convention, signed 5th March, 1902, submitted the Brussels Sugar Convention, in order to afford them the opportunity of giving their adhesion to it; when was that Convention thus submitted to each of the colonies in question; what replies have since been received from these colonies and from the Government of India with regard to this question; and does the Commonwealth of Australia, which on the 10th March had refused to adhere to the Convention, still maintain that refusal.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The Brussels Convention was duly submitted to all the self-governing colonies in a despatch dated the 21st of April, 1902. No further communication has been received from the Commonwealth of Australia since March, and the only other reply received from the self-governing colonies has been one from the Government of New Zealand intimating that they do not desire to adhere. I understand that the Government of India have not as yet signified their wishes in the matter.

Registry of Shipping and Seamen—Removal of Offices.

SIR FORTESCUE FLANNERY (Yorkshire, Shipley): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that the Registry of Shipping and Seamen has been removed from the Custom House, Thames Street, in the City of London, to Carlisle Place, Victoria Street; and whether, in view of the inconvenience caused by this change to those interested in shipping affairs, who have frequently to consult the shipping registers daily, he can see his way to reconsider the position of the Registry, with a view to removing it at an early date to a more convenient site.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BONAR LAW, Glasgow, Blackfriars): Yes, Sir, but the arrangement which has been made is merely temporary. The Board of Trade hope that steps will be taken at the earliest opportunity to provide suitable permanent accommodation for the Registry in the City. Meanwhile every effort is being made to obviate any public inconvenience, and a small staff of clerks in telephonic communication with the head office is still located in the Custom House.

SIR FORTESCUE FLANNERY: Can the hon. Gentleman give me any idea how long this inconvenience is likely to last?

MR. BONAR LAW: I am sorry I cannot state any time, but I hope it will not be long.

Oliver Cromwell's Bust.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the hon. Member for West Derbyshire, as representing the First Commissioner of Works, whether he will state upon what grounds the request of the donor of the bust of Oliver Cromwell, that the donor's name should be prominently inscribed upon the pedestal, was acceded to, thus conferring a favour upon the donor of this bust not enjoyed by the donors of any other statues or busts in the Palace of Westminster.

MR. VICTOR CAVENDISH (Derbyshire, W.): I do not think that I can add anything to the answer which I gave to my hon. friend on Monday last.†

Irish Primary Schools and the Equivalent Grant.

MR. DOOGAN (Tyrone, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is in a position to state, in view of the needs of national education, that the balance of the equivalent grant not ear-marked for the Land Purchase Bill will be devoted to improve the efficiency of the primary schools in Ireland.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): I have nothing at present to add to the replies already given by me to similar Questions.

Judicial Rents in East Tyrone.

MR. DOOGAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is he aware that in cases throughout East Tyrone where judicial fixings were made out of Court, the agreement was not forwarded by the officials of the Land Office to be filed by the Land Commission; and, if so, whether he will take steps to have the judicial period determined, in the absence of such agreements, by the evidence of the rent reduction as shown by the rent receipts.

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† See page 220.

MR. WYNDHAM: Section 8 (6) of the Land Law Act, 1881, and the Rules thereunder, provide that all such agreements shall be lodged with and filed by the Clerk of the Peace or the Land Commission. Agreements filed with the Clerk of the Peace are good even though copies may not have been forwarded to the Land Commission.

Newry Orange Demonstrations.

MR. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Orange lodges of Newry have decided to hold a demonstration at Rostrevor, on the 12th proximo; and whether, in view of the opinions expressed last year on behalf of the Irish Executive, and in the interests of public peace, he will at once prohibit the meeting.

MR. WYNDHAM: Any decision of the Government to prohibit a meeting, or to regulate place of or route of access to a meeting, must be based on the circumstances of each case. I know of nothing in the present condition of Ireland which leads me to believe that any body of Irishmen intend to adopt an attitude so provocative towards any other body of Irishmen as to call for the intervention of the Government.

MR. MACVEAGH: Do the Irish Government still adhere to the opinion of last year that Rostrevor is not a suitable place for demonstrations?

MR. WYNDHAM: I have said that each case must be considered as it arises, and in view of the surrounding circumstances.

Loughbrickland Co-operative Society and the Post Office.

MR. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether, in view of the business requirements of the Loughbrickland (county Down) Co-operative Society, Limited, and of the proximity of the office of the society to the boundary of the town delivery, he will give instructions to have delivered to the society all letters arriving by the mid-day mail, instead of holding them back till next day.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.): I will make inquiry on this question and inform the hon. Member of the result as soon as possible.

Commercial Treaty with Germany.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will lay upon the Table the official correspondence relating to the denunciation of the Commercial Treaty with Germany.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): Will the right hon. Gentleman at the same time also lay on the Table such correspondence as took place between the British and German Governments with regard to the Canadian preferential tariff.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will put down that Question. In reply to the hon. Member for Dundee, I have to say that I have no objection to laying the Paper for which he asks.

NEW BILL.

SMALL HOLDINGS BILL.

"To amend the Small Holdings Act, 1892," presented by Mr. Jesse Collings; supported by Colonel Long, Mr. Goulding, Major Rasch, Mr. Carlile, and Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 25th June, and to be printed. [Bill 241.]

FINANCE BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question [9th June], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Which Amendment was—

"To leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'this House considers that the financial policy of His Majesty's Government, in the remission of indirect taxation imposed only last year for purposes of a permanent character, involves a needless and injurious disturbance of trade and a serious loss to the Revenue, without substantial relief to the consumer; and that, if any remission of indirect taxation is considered necessary by His Majesty's Government, such remission ought to be made by a reduction of the Duties proposed to be levied on tea or other articles of general consumption.'"—(*Mr. Chaplin.*)

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MAJOR SEELY (Isle of Wight): Some of the speakers have complained that the House has not received sufficient information to enable it to come to a judgment on the repeal of the corn duty, or the maintaining of it as suggested. I cannot say that I require any information on this matter, owing to the history of what has taken place since the tax was first imposed. I did notice, however, throughout the whole of yesterday's debate, to which I listened with great attention, that we were able to come to some kind of agreement on one or two points. The first was that this tax, which it is not now proposed to maintain, was originally imposed as a purely fiscal measure to enable us to get more money either to pay for the war, or to meet the interest coming due on moneys borrowed for war purposes. It was further laid down at that time that it had not, nor was it intended to have, any protective tendencies. The second point which seems to be apparent is that many persons who have no protective tendencies are disappointed that this tax should be removed, since, in point of fact, as they allege, it caused no hardship to any individual. I suppose that that is the attitude taken up by the right hon. Member for Sleaford. The third point which came out most clearly was this: that since this tax was imposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol, it has assumed an entirely new complexion. Whereas it was originally imposed as a fiscal measure, it has since come to be regarded by many persons in this country, and especially by those who favour protective taxation, as a thin edge of the wedge of protection. For that reason Chambers of Commerce and others, who, rightly from their own point of view, no doubt, regard the protection of agriculture as desirable, are extremely disappointed that the tax should be removed, for it is indubitable to them that this duty on corn may be used as a means by which we may strengthen certain ties which bind us to our colonies. I myself, as a convinced free trader, have no doubt whatever in this matter. If this tax is to be regarded, as undoubtedly it is regarded, as the thin edge of the wedge of protection, I rejoice that it is at once to be repealed, and I support the Government and the Chancellor of the Exchequer in all that they have said as to the desirability of repealing it. I will only say one word as to the possibility that this tax if retained might be of use in strengthening the bonds of Empire which we all wish to see strengthened. I presume I shall be in order in saying this purely in reference to this shilling duty on corn. Nobody wishes to see strengthened the bonds to which I have referred more than I do, and if I may say so with all respect I have special reasons for thinking so, because at the time when those bonds showed valuable proof of their existence I had the privilege of seeing how great was the help rendered to us by our colonies. I myself have served with forces in the field which have done work for this country the value of which can never be overestimated, and if it were possible that, by adopting the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford we could assist in strengthening those bonds, I, for one, would not take the course which I propose to take to-day in voting against the Amendment. But in my opinion that is not the case. I support the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Financial Secretary to the Treasury in all they have said against the attempt to convert a lofty ideal into a sordid system of profit-sharing.

*MR. SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. Member that that is not the question before the House, and if I permitted him to proceed I should be encouraging others to follow the same line.

MAJOR SEELY: I humbly apologise, Sir. I did not know that I should be transgressing your ruling, or I would not have said what I have already said. With regard to this tax which it is now proposed to repeal. I look upon it as a fiscal measure, and in that light consider it defensible, but as the thin edge of the wedge of protection I say it is absolutely indefensible, and I earnestly trust, therefore, that, when we go to a division, the House, by an overwhelming majority, will decide that it will have nothing to do with such questions as have been adumbrated by certain persons in authority.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I do not propose to detain the House many minutes, as I have already had an opportunity of speaking on some of the subjects which are really being debated. But there are two or three aspects of the matter which have been rather left out of sight in the course of the debate which has since taken place, and to these I should like to draw attention, because without transgressing the rules of order by which we are so closely bound, I think it may be possible to present some new considerations to the House. I do not know whether hon. Members have read the Amendment on which they are going to vote. But I would venture to point out that it is very different from what one would suppose it to be, bearing in mind the nature of the discussion which has taken place. We are not asked by it to vote on Clause I. of the Finance Bill, and we shall have another opportunity of discussing that question and the repeal of the corn duties. The Amendment now before the House is a curious Amendment. It makes a number of statements to which the majority of the House will cordially assent. It is a self-evident proposition to state, as the Amendment does, that the financial policy of the Government, so far as the House knows what it is, "involves a needless and injurious disturbance of Trade." I say so far as we have been able to elicit the policy of the Government in the course of this debate. But I would ask, is the House likely to succeed in obtaining a distinct statement as to what the policy of the Government is going to be? The leading authorities of the Government, on a question of this kind, ought to be those who represent the Treasury and the Board of Trade. The opinion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been distinctly expressed to the House, and we know what it is. We know also what is the opinion of the Secretary to the Treasury. But these Gentlemen did not clearly tell us that it is the policy of the Administration as a whole. With regard to the Board of Trade, the President of which is absent for causes which we all regret, all we know is that the Secretary to that Board, speaking for himself and not for his Department, represents a diametrically opposite view on the main issue as between free trade and protection. The lead which we ought to obtain from the Prime Minister, who is the head of the Treasury, has been wanting up to the present time, and I confess I fear, from what we have seen during this debate, that even if the Prime Minister winds up the discussion to-day we are not likely to obtain from him on this occasion that lead which the House and the country ought to receive.

What was the attitude of the Prime Minister when last he spoke upon this question? It was an attitude of doubt—of loudly expressed doubt on every one of the free trade propositions, and of doubt with an air of assent to every one of the protectionist propositions; and hampered as we are by the rules of the House on the present occasion, I think that probably the present restrictions of debate will not be unpleasing to the right hon. Gentleman, who is likely to tell us even less now than he has told us before. Is not that a humiliating position for this House? Has it not a right to demand that if we cannot discuss this question to-day, if we cannot discuss it on Clause I. of this Bill, we shall have some other opportunity of discussing and of taking the judgment of the House on the fiscal policy of the Government? The Government may reply that it is always open to the Leaders of the Opposition to bring forward a vote of censure, but I venture to assert that this is not an occasion when a vote of censure would elicit the opinion of the House, and I maintain that we ought to have a free and unfettered opportunity of giving such aid to the Government and the country as is possible in the decision of a question of this stupendous importance. I should be out of order if I were to attempt to discuss the question how far this announcement or suggestion of doubt with regard to the national policy of free trade has disturbed the relations of this country. We know that threats have been addressed to us from certain quarters, and we know also that the question has excited the deepest interest in the minds of the people of India, who form an overwhelming majority of the people of this Empire. The doubt which has been thrown upon our Imperial fiscal policy—a policy so long regarded as a settled matter—has proved disturbing in the highest degree, and it is the first duty of the Government to give a lead to the country and to the Empire in regard to it.

There is another point in the Amendment which has not received any consideration in the course of this debate, and that is the final proposition which has been taken, I think, from the admirable speech of my right hon. friend the Member for West Monmouth on the night when the Budget was introduced. This Budget, which we are now called upon to support, was opposed by us on the first night of its introduction. The suggestion in the Amendment is that it does not do enough in the remission of indirect taxation, and that the tea duty ought to have been reduced. That view received our support on the night of the introduction of the Budget, and we shall, of course, be prepared, when circumstances admit, to support it again. We do not like this Budget; we voted against it on its introduction, and we shall be prepared to vote against it again. But it is mainly on account of the speech of the mover of the Amendment, rather than because of its actual terms, that most persons on this side of the House are likely to vote against it to-day. This speech recommended a large increase of the duty on corn in the future, and we have this stupendous admission from those who now dare, for the first time for many years, to call themselves protectionists in the House of Commons, that the higher duty which they recommend in place of this shilling corn duty will be paid by the consumers of this country. We should be out of order in this debate if we were to attempt to discuss any of the purposes for which it is proposed to raise this larger duty, and we should be equally out of order in discussing the question of devoting the money to social schemes such as old-age pensions, etc. But may I say this —that it has not been attempted to be shown that the poorest of the poor, on whom, by the admission of protectionists, this tax will fall in the case of a larger duty, will ever obtain the benefit or that they will not be taxed for the advantage of other persons in a better position. The Prime Minister has not given the House any guidance. In the speech which he made when this question was debated before the Adjournment, he said that this country must more and more depend upon foreign countries for its supplies of food. Yes, but it is this supply of food which it is proposed to tax in the future in a higher degree, and the price will be raised against the poorest of the poor for no benefit which they will receive, and for purposes which, in this House, we are unable to discuss. The only answer which has been made in this debate — and it has been powerfully attacked by the Secretary to the Treasury in his speech—is that wages might be raised in the event of the adoption of protection of this kind. But how are the wages to be raised? Are they to be raised by combination; by efforts in the way of strikes on the part of the poorest of the poor? Is that a pleasant industrial prospect to hold out to this country? We are in a great difficulty in debating this matter, not only on this occasion but we shall be on all occasions throughout this Finance Bill. Arguments on the protectionists' side are not brought forward in this House, but they appear, day by day, in letters in the Press, which are widely circulated throughout the country among the classes to whom they are intended to appeal.

I believe I shall be in order, after the speeches of the right hon. gentleman the Member for South Aberdeen and of the Secretary to the Treasury, in briefly alluding to the most powerful of the arguments in favour of protection which have recently been put forward. We are told we must be a foolish people in this country to maintain a policy different from that which prevails elsewhere. We are told that the United States and Germany are prospering under a system of protection, and that wages there are rising. The House must be cautioned not to believe these things without examination. Those Members who have inquired into the circumstances for themselves, those who have taken the trouble to test the figures, know how little truth there is in them, and what an enormous amount of exaggeration there is in the argument put forward on these grounds.

With regard to our trade as a whole, I may point out that our foreign trade at this moment is equal to that of the United States, Germany and France put together. Our trade with Germany, where the system of protection is most strongly enforced against our goods, is still an increasing trade; its total is greater than it was six years ago. Yet, in spite of these facts, we read in the papers reckless assertions on the subject which will not bear the test of examination, as I am sure the financial advisers to the Government will tell the House. Why, Germany, which is supposed to be making such advances under the system of protection, has not even been able to get into our markets in South America Therefore I say, when we are told that protection is such a success throughout the world, we must take the trouble to examine the facts for ourselves. With regard to the United States, considering the stupendous natural advantages of that country, it is only marvellous that it has not attained the first place years ago. I am convinced, whatever may be the opinions of a small and infinitesimal minority of this House, that the overwhelming majority of the House and of the people of the Empire will, if they will only take the trouble to examine the facts, arrive at the conclusion that the advance in the trade of the United States has not been due to protection, but that, on the contrary, it has been retarded by it. What the House wants to know, however, is when we are to have an opportunity of discussing this policy of the Government. The question has not been raised by us, and it is for those who have raised it to permit the House to give the country the advantage and assistance of its enlightened judgment. We are placed in a humiliating position by being refused a chance of stating our views and of backing them by our votes, and I repeat that we ought to have an opportunity given us by the Government for placing on record the judgment of the House on these questions which have been so rashly raised.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): The right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken has referred to those who have recently had courage enough to avow protectionist views. I do not think I am one of those to whom he was alluding. It is twenty-two years since I was returned to Parliament as an avowed protectionist, and I have never swerved from my opinions—opinions the holding of which had I been an ambitious man, might not have contributed to my advancement politically. With regard to the comparisons with the United States, I should like to ask the right hon. Baronet how many steel rails and ships' plates would have been forged in America without the influence of protection? The right hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that Cobden's idea was that the United States would confine themselves mainly, if not entirely, to the production of the food products for the artisan population of this and other countries, but they evidently thought differently, and determined to become a great manufacturing power, and have recently amply succeeded in their object. As to the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it seems to have been made from a document purloined from the recesses which contain the notes of the speeches delivered by right hon. Gentlemen opposite last year. Those speeches did not convince the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time, because he then voted for the proposal which he so strongly condemns this year. Fortunately the right hon. Gentleman has colleagues who take a wider, more patriotic, and more Imperial view of their duties. [Cries of "Name."] One must have some sense of proportion, and not confuse Chelsea Hospital with a sentry-box. We are in this position: that the Chancellor of the Exchequer differs from the views of his predecessor in office in regard to this corn tax, while he also differs from the action he himself took a year ago. A Member of great experience and ability, the right hon. Member for Cambridge University, has condescended to retail some of the stalest platitudes which have discredited the leaflets of the Cobden Club for the last half-century. I am sorry to see such pabulum served up by so many in the course of this debate. An orthodox free trader of the highest repute, Sir Robert Giffen, has admitted that all these theories should be considered in the light of the circumstances of the hour, and not dealt with on the Sermon-on-the-Mount principle, which Lord

Rosebery has so properly described. Those who have studied this matter have been driven to the conclusion that, however desirable the old-fangled fiscal arrangements may have been fifty years ago, they are not up-to-date, and that, with our growing Empire, we are bound to consider these matters in a practical light. I trust that the House will not be deterred from that anxious, full inquiry which has been suggested by the Prime Minister and some of his colleagues, and I hope that they will look into this matter free from bias and prejudice and shake off the old bogey of the clap-trap tradition of free trade, falsely so-called, which has never really ensured free communication amongst the nations, and has absolutely ignored our Imperial responsibilities.

MR. BLAKE (Longford, S.): This day twelve months I said a few words to the House in opposition to the imposition of this corn tax, and upon that occasion I ventured to give some of my principal reasons for that proposition. I pointed out—

> "That as this corn tax would open the door more than any other to the agitation for protection in this country, and also to the scheme for preferential tariffs, hence it followed that the question of the permanence of the tax was a very serious thing. I accepted absolutely the declaration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that this tax had not been proposed by the Government in view of protection or of preferential duties. But when the tax was once put on it would give the greatest facilities to them or their successors for introducing these schemes, and when they came to consider the possibility of that danger the thing became serious indeed. Time had always made very quick changes amongst politicians as well as other persons. Still the tendencies that produced those changes were frequently manifested long before the change occurred. Changes themselves took place more rapidly in these days than formerly. And while he gave the Chancellor of the Exchequer full credit for what he said and for being determined that this tax should not be utilised in the sense and for the purpose suggested, he was not at all so sure that at some future day the tax would not be employed for the purposes which had been referred to."

I deprecated a view which had been presented by the hon. Gentleman who was lately admitted to the Government, and I said—

> "The hon. Gentleman who had just sat down rather deprecated the idea of a plain expression of opinion in Parliament on this subject before the Conference, and thus before there was any committal by the Executive Government. But I wholly differed. They ought to have plain expressions."

I insisted even then that it was a paramount duty of Parliament to speak and make plain its opinion and position upon this question. Upon that occasion I concluded my statement of objections to the tax with this declaration—

> "It was because I felt deeply with regard to the impolicy and misfortune of this tax, in the burden it laid on the poor and on trade, in the dark example it set to the world, in the evil hopes it produced here and abroad, and in the leverage it gave for its own application and extension that I should vote against it now and on every future occasion."

Having stated those views to the House, Mr. Speaker, you will easily judge that I came down to the House of Commons yesterday still in opposition to the retention of this tax, the imposition of which I had objected to on this day last year. I had hoped that I should have been able to give in full the reasons for objecting to the retention of this tax which I gave last year against its imposition. It appears, however, that I cannot do so, and it is only to a very partial extent that I can touch at all upon what is the real question that is in the mind of every hon. Member in this House. I shall not follow some examples set me under these circumstances, and I shall obey your ruling, Mr. Speaker, not only in the letter but in the spirit.

I wish to say that I believe that this House of Commons could not more degrade itself or lower itself in the estimation of those to whom it is responsible, and to the world, than by accepting a view of its duty and of the responsibilities of its leaders which would be consistent with any lengthened delay to a full, free, and exhaustive discussion of this question. I heard with an admiration which, I am sure, was shared by everyone who heard him, whether he agreed or differed, the speech of extraordinary ability delivered by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bristol yesterday, and I believe the view he stated that the situation which had been shadowed forth was an absolutely impossible one. We should be beneath contempt if, while entrusted with the destinies of this country, we permitted this question to remain in its present position. When speeches of more or less importance are made, and when letters are fired off every day in the newspapers; when not merely unauthorised programmes by a Member of the Opposition, but a programme is put before the country by a leading member of the Government; when working men are to be appealed to to reverse the fiscal policy of the country, and all this under the ægis of an Administration which is keeping an open mind upon the subject, it is an absolutely impossible situation. I feel that the position is so impossible that if it is continued much longer it will be disastrous. Of course I wish the present Government to continue in office, at any rate for some time; and it is because I feel that the continuance of the Government in office even for that time is being rendered impossible by this situation that I do protest against any suggestion of that kind, and I do earnestly beg of hon. Gentlemen and right hon. Gentlemen opposite to take up a position more worthy of themselves and more worthy of the House and the country. I say it is the duty of the Government and the Leaders of the House to arrange that the House of Commons shall not be gagged, and that hon. Members shall have a full and free opportunity of discussing that which, more than any other question in the whole arena of politics, engages its hopes, fears, and anxieties to-day, and that upon that occasion they themselves will give us the advantage of the counsel and advice, not of men who differ amongst themselves and keep open minds, but of a united Cabinet.

*MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): I agree with the hon. Member opposite that this debate is a very unreal one. After the speech which has just been delivered by the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean, I am in still greater doubt as to what is in order and what is not in order upon this occasion. I have listened attentively to almost every word in this debate, and I have endeavoured to extract from it some light and leading to guide me in giving my vote upon this Amendment. As a private Member I have a right to expect that definite light and leading, but hitherto I have certainly not received it. Consequently, I am placed in the very undesirable position, so abhorrent to Whips, of having to make up my own mind and to think the matter out for myself. I deeply regret to find myself in disagreement with the Government on this question of repealing the registration duty on corn. I regret this especially because I most heartily support the suggestion put forward by the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary that we should reconsider and look into the whole of our fiscal system, not necessarily, with a view to resorting to protection, but with a view to finding out whether, after all, the present system is the best system for this country. With every desire to understand the Government position in this matter, I must say that it seems to me that the two policies of remitting the corn tax and reconsidering our whole fiscal position, are diametrically opposed to one another. Their very atmospheres are irreconcilable. The one redolent of the Central Office and the Whips' Room, and the other breathing something of the spirit in which a great Empire thinks out its own changing problems, and does what it thinks best, regardless of party manœuvres or vague threats of foreign retaliation. Under these circumstances I am compelled to fall back upon the advice I receive from other sources, and I refer particularly in the first place to the speech of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer. To my mind he defined the issue beyond all doubt. First of all he demonstrated quite clearly that this tax was a desirable tax to retain from a fiscal point of view, and he said that the reasons which he put forward last year in proposing the tax were still perfectly sound reasons, and that it was a tax which it was eminently desirable to retain. I heartily agree with him, but he went on to say that he would nevertheless support the remission of the tax because its removal would constitute an absolute bar to the adoption of any such policy as was outlined by the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary. That makes my course very clear. The only other authority I would quote is that of a journalistic cherub who sits up aloft on behalf of a leading Radical organ and who, in a serious letter to *The Times* newspaper a short time ago, stated that protection was a necessary consequence of Imperialism, whether Liberal or Conservative.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea): And conscription afterwards.

*MR. ARTHUR LEE: I hope the Liberal Imperialists in the House will appreciate that remark. He further said that the only alternative to the Colonial Secretary's policy was Little Englandism. That view is apparently endorsed by a distinguished Gentleman on the other side of the House, and therefore I do not make any further apology for quoting it. That seems to me good advice from a very unexpected source, and having thus gathered that a vote given for the continuation of the corn tax is a vote given for the Colonial Secretary's and the Prime Minister's policy, and that a vote given for the Colonial Secretary's policy is a vote against Little Englandism, then my last doubts are removed as to which way I should vote in this matter. I am anxious that my motives and position should be quite incapable of being misunderstood, and I therefore wish to state unequivocally that my chief objection to the remission of this tax is because I am an ardent believer in the greater policy foreshadowed, and because I believe the two things to be absolutely incompatible. I am in the fortunate position of having never professed to be an out and out free trader, and, therefore, I do not feel it necessary in passing to bow the knee to Baal, as most other gentlemen have been compelled to do. At the same time I do not call myself a protectionist. I prefer the name of Fair Trader, and for this reason: fair trade is the direct antithesis of the foul trade which is causing us so much injury at the present time. I do not think it is necessary to explain why, after a good many years residence in a protectionist colony, and in the greatest of protectionist countries, the United States, I should not be frightened by any bogey cry of protection, or that it would spell ruin to a great country like this. I may be perhaps allowed to quote a saying of a very distinguished scientist, who was also a distinguished Liberal, Lord Playfair, who, in 1891, in reference to this question of protection spelling ruin said—

> "If the American system of protection was successful in practice"—

I do not think the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean would say that it has not been successful in practice.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: My argument was that the natural resources of the United States accounted for the prosperity there.

*MR. ARTHUR LEE: But protection developed those resources, and Lord Playfair said—

> "If the American system of protection was successful in practice, the whole policy of the United Kingdom is founded on a gigantic error and must lead to our ruin as a commercial nation."

That is, I think, an opinion which ought to command respect from the other side of the House. At any rate I think it is worthy of consideration. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Forest of Dean also stated that he had heard no arguments on the other side of the House in the course of this debate in favour of protection. This debate has not been a very simple and straightforward one, and, owing to Mr. Speaker's ruling, a great many hon. Members, including the mover of the Amendment, did not have an opportunity of defending their position. The extreme free traders have on the whole had a better opportunity of putting forward their side of the case, and perhaps on that account they may think they have had things a good deal their own way. But I cannot congratulate them on having put forward as yet any well reasoned arguments in support of their position. What we have had has been mostly old catchwords and generalities, and mere bold assertions, without any attempt to prove them. We have had the old appeal as to what Cobden or Adam Smith, if they had been alive and in active politics at the present day, would have done. I do not think I need say much on that point beyond reminding the House of an answer once given by a candidate at a military examination. He was asked one of the usual fatuous questions as to what he thought Napoleon would have done if he had had the command of the French Army at the battle of Wœrth. His reply was that if Napoleon had been present at the battle of Wœrth, he would have been such an extremely old man that he would have taken no interest in the proceedings. The application of this story to the cases of Cobden and Adam Smith is, I think, sufficiently obvious. I quite agree with the right hon. Baronet that there must be another occasion when this whole question can be discussed, and when the reasoned arguments and figures, and facts for and against, can be brought forward. We know this is an occasion when that cannot be done, although the right hon. Gentleman did manage to work in a few figures—I will not call them facts—which I believe to be entirely inaccurate, with regard particularly to the trade of the United States of America, of which I do know something. And whilst I should not be permitted on this occasion to refute these figures, I hope that on some other occasion I shall have an opportunity of dealing with them. I would only remind the right hon. Gentleman of one thing. He suggested, that the prosperity of the United States and Germany was not relatively greater than the prosperity of this country. I would ask him to glance over the last thirty years, and he will find that during that time the export trade of the United States has trebled, and that of Germany doubled, while our export trade has been practically stationary, if not actually declining.

I do not suggest, as regards this very unsatisfactory debate, that the free traders are all in the wrong, or that the fair traders are absolutely right, but I do contend that there is room for a good deal of calm, scientific discussion of the whole problem, though I think it is extremely unlikely we are going to get it, and I must say that I think the Prime Minister's forecast, or hope, was almost pathetically optimistic when he said that the country would ruminate over this question for two years and then come to a decision. I could not wait so long. I am in a position which I think few Members of the House are in. I have consulted my constituents on this question, so far as has been possible in the very limited time, and so far as I could gather their opinions in a fortnight's hard work among them, I found that there was not the slightest fear on their part of any re-examination or overhauling of our fiscal system, even if it should lead to the adoption eventually of a fair trade policy. I should have liked to have dealt with one or two assertions put forward by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Aberdeen last night, because he speaks with great authority on everything connected with the United States of America, and if his remarks are allowed to pass unchallenged now, their accuracy might never be questioned. I must call particular attention to one remark he made. He said that "the prosperity of the United States was a testimony to free trade rather than protection." I do not pretend to know so much about the United States as he does, but surely he will have noticed that there has been an enormous and surprising increase in the commercial prosperity of the United States since 1891, when the M'Kinley tariff was introduced. It was almost a prohibitory tariff on all imports. In that year the exports from this country to the United States were valued at £32,000,000, while the American exports to this country were £97,000,000. Now, after twelve years of that tariff the figures have changed, and we only export £18,000,000 worth to the United States, and they export £108,000,000 worth to us, amounting to almost an absolute transference of trade. I do not see how, that being so, he can claim that the prosperity of the United States is a testimony to free trade rather than protection.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): What I did dwell upon was that as far as regards food the United States was in the position of a free trade country, because she gets all the food she wants without any protective tariff, and that the cheapness of food has been a powerful factor in the prosperity of the United States.

*Mr. ARTHUR LEE: The right hon. Gentleman cannot deny that the general cost of living of working men in America is at least 20 per cent. higher than in this country.

Mr. BRYCE dissented.

*Mr. ARTHUR LEE: Then he rejects the report of the Royal Commission on Depression of Trade in which figures were quoted to show that the cost of living for American workmen was 20 per cent. higher, and that their wages were 80 per cent higher than in England. That shows that the argument is on the side of those who claim that an increase in the price of food leads to an increase in the rate of wages. Could any one who has lived in the two countries deny that the general condition of the working classes is infinitely more favourable in America than in this country. I think it is obvious that the American workman is better clothed, better lodged, better fed, and better off in every way, and this in spite of the fact that he has to pay a much higher average rate for his living. I could quote in further proof of that the Report of the Moseley Commission, which states that the American working man is at least 25 per cent. better off than the British working man.

I will conclude by returning for a moment to the specific question of the registration duty on corn. In giving my vote for the Amendment I wish to say that I have the opinion of my constituents behind me. They are in the same position that I am—they are quite unable to understand the Government's change of front in this matter. Nor can they understand why a tax which was advocated on broad financial grounds in 1902 became unsound, oppressive, and unnecessary in 1903. I confess that I cannot, nor do I think they can, further follow the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his reading of political economy as given in his speech yesterday. He then pointed out, contrary to the whole of the Government's arguments last year, that this tax fell entirely on the consumer, but in the same breath the right hon. Gentleman declared that the increased tax on tea did not bear on the consumer. It is a little difficult to understand why the political economists are so uncertain as to the effect of this tax. I agree with the late Chancellor of the Exchequer that this tax does not fall on the consumer in this country, and therefore the right hon. Gentleman's professed object to remit indirect taxation concurrently with the reduction in the Income Tax will not have that effect.

The CHANCELLOR of THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. Ritchie, Croydon): I was explaining the difference between the duties on tea and flour. The price of flour had risen to the full extent, and more, of the duty, but that is not the case with tea.

*Mr. ARTHUR LEE: I am afraid the right hon. Gentleman's political economy is beyond me. I supported the Government last year in putting on the tax because I thought the arguments used by the right hon. Member for West Bristol were sound, logical, and statesmanlike. I believe them still to be so. Indeed, they have been proved to be so, and under those circumstances I find it quite impossible to execute the somersault required by voting against the tax this year. We are told that the reason for remitting it was due to the misrepresentation it had caused, but that excuse has already been ridiculed out of court. The remission of the tax has pleased nobody, not even the Opposition, and has certainly mortified and stultified a great number of the Government's loyal supporters. It has further thrown away two and a half millions of revenue, which could have been applied to a very useful purpose, even if it had not been used as suggested for reducing the tax on tea. Another and final reason for voting for the retention of the corn tax is that the Opposition are against it. Being a good Party man I have always understood my duty to be to oppose the Opposition. I have also been informed by old Parliamentary hands that when the two Front Benches are agreed on any particular policy that policy should be regarded with more than ordinary suspicion. Under all these circumstances, believing as I do in the wisdom of the suggestions put forward by the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary that we should rediscuss our financial position and inquire into the whole question of fair trade and preferential tariffs, and realising that if they are to be encouraged in this course, they must receive a mandate from the constituencies, I venture to assure the Government that my constituency, at any rate, is ready to give them that mandate. and is not afraid of an examination of the whole question. Under those circumstances I am anxious to encourage the Government in this wise course by voting for the retention of the only one of our existing taxes which could form a proper germ or basis for the new policy.

*MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): Many of us will sympathise with the singular position in which the hon. Member who has just sat down finds himself. He is where some of us have been in the past, not being able to support the Government whom on ordinary occasions we follow. He commenced his remarks by making the same plaintive request which fell from the hon. Member for the Isle of Wight, who moved the adjournment of the debate last night, viz., that as a supporter of the Government he desired to have some light and leading from the Government. Now there is no more wearisome person in the world than the leader who will not lead. [Great laughter, during which the Prime Minister entered the House.] I will take advantage of the right hon. Gentleman's re-appearance to repeat my remark, and I hope he will not consider it in any way personally disrespectful. There is no more wearisome person in the world than the leader who will not lead. I think the right hon. Gentleman heard what fell from the hon. Member for Fareham in his pathetic request for light and leading, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman will give it to the hon. Member and to the House before we arrive at a decision to-night. I wish to devote my remarks to considering two aspects of that subject now before the House. In the first place, the very great and alarming increase in the national expenditure; and in the next place, the fiscal policy of the Government so far as it hangs on to, and is raised by, the shilling duty on corn. I shall endeavour to walk very warily so as to keep, so far as I can, within the limits of your ruling, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member who has just sat down says that this has been a very unreal debate. On the contrary, I think it has been very interesting, and as it has progressed the matter has opened out, and I believe it will only be the precursor of a great deal more useful discussion on the same topic.

The most important incident in our proceedings yesterday was the reappearance of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol. That right hon. Gentleman is a great ornament to this Assembly. He combines in a most unique manner many elements which give him a position and an authority in the House which everyone acknowledges. He is the oldest Member of the House; he is the father of the House. He has by practical service on Committees in the House at large, and in high office, acquired a knowledge of the procedure and practice of the House second to none. We heard you, Sir, last year very gracefully acknowledge the paramount authority of the right hon. Gentleman in a matter of procedure. A number of us have seen the right hon. Gentleman lead this House with general acceptance when he had not at his command a majority of the House—a most difficult position. In the days when the Colonial Secretary was doing good municipal service in Birmingham, when the present Prime Minister was one of a band of four below the gangway, the right hon. Gentleman was a Minister of the Crown. Again, the right hon. Gentleman has filled the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer longer than any one man consecutively for generations. It is these considerations which give such special weight and unique authority to his opinions. In the speech which he delivered yesterday with such unique authority, the right hon. Gentleman drew attention in the most forcible manner to the leaps and bounds with which our national expenditure has mounted up; he pointed to the fact that it was increasing to a far greater extent than the automatic increase in the revenue. To illustrate this I will take a few figures from four years—the last two years for which the Liberal Government were responsible, and two first years for which the Conservative Government were responsible. They are to be found in the Return moved by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton. The net expenditure for the year ending 31st March, 1887, was £78,000,000, and for the year 1896, £85,000,000, or an increase of 10 per cent. in the nine years from 1887 to 1896, the expenditure for the year 1899 was £94,000,000, and for the year 1904, £128,000,000, or an increase in the eight years, from 1896 to 1904, of 50 per cent. I may say that there is not a penny in these figures arising from the war in South Africa. These figures tell a tale. We all know the increase arises almost wholly from one item—the expenditure on military and naval armaments. In 1887 the expenditure on armaments was £32,000,000, and in 1896 £38,000,000. In 1899 the expenditure on armaments was £44,000,000, and in 1904 £69,000,000. The increase for the period of nine years, from 1887 to 1896, was 20 per cent.; and the increase for the eight years, from 1896 to 1904, was 81 per cent. That is an appalling increase. It cannot go on. No one recognises that more strongly than the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol. We heard a most significant statement last night—a statement the like of which is not often heard in this House. It was that if his protest as to expenditure in the Cabinet had met with more sympathy he would hardly be speaking from the seat from which he spoke last night; his resignation would not have been necessary. Then the right hon. Gentleman went on to say that—

> "The Estimates this year have shown an increase which is not justified by anything within my knowledge."

These are words of great gravity coming from a man of his experience. Expenditure depends on policy. Mr. Disraeli emphasised that over and over again. And in this connection nothing has been more marked than the change of policy in respect to territorial expansion, in respect to armaments, in respect to the attitude of the mind of the country and of Ministers here towards that blessed word "peace," that has taken place during the last twenty years. Lord Aberdeen was Prime Minister during the Crimean War, and he left it on record that he did not think it right to erect a church for the worship of God on his estate because, almost unwillingly, he had drifted into that war. What a contrast to a man who does not hesitate to say that if he had any share in bringing about the Boer war, it would be a feather in his cap. There you have, in a nutshell, the difference between the two epochs; and I say we must return to the spirit which animated Earl Grey, Lord John Russell Lord Aberdeen, Sir Robert Peel, and Mr. Gladstone with respect to peace and our foreign relations, and we must depart from the spirit of the long-spoon speech and retaliation.

*MR. SPEAKER: The observations of the hon. Gentleman do not appear to me to be relevant to the particular Amendment before the House.

*MR. JOHN ELLIS: I thought, Mr. Speaker, that we were allowed to discuss the Finance Bill with the Amendment. I beg pardon; I was led away unwittingly.

Now I turn to my second point, which I think is raised distinctly by the proposal in the Finance Bill to withdraw the corn duty, and the proposal in the Amendment to retain it. Of course, the corn duty itself is not a very large matter. It does not raise a great amount of revenue. It is only really important when it becomes the battle-cry and flag between the opposing forces of protection and free trade. In so far as it raises that very great issue, it is an extremely important matter. It is in vain, I venture to say, for the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford—though he does it, of course, with the utmost good faith—to say that this tax has no element of protection in it. We welcomed yesterday the speech of the Secretary to the Treasury, which had not much flavour of what is called the Front Bench about it. He distinctly declared that the Members of the great deputation to the Chancellor of the Exchequer had, as was evident, something else in their mind than mere fiscal revenue. They had looming in their minds a change in our fiscal policy. That is an enormous issue. It is a fundamental revolution. I suppose after what has been said by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol, we may drop the word "misrepresentation." But there has been, not only in regard to this particular duty, but in regard to the whole question of free trade to protection, an amount of misapprehension and misunderstanding which is almost inconceivable. The name of Mr. Cobden has been very freely used. Mr. Cobden was not the only free trader, although, of course, no one can deprive him of the great glory of making a free trade policy inevitable. But Sir Robert Peel was the Prime Minister who carried these things through the House. I invite any hon. Member to look back on the slow and sure steps by which Sir Robert Peel—that most sagacious, high-minded, and able statesman—passed from protection to free trade. The resistless force of logic and circumstance brought home to his mind the fact that free trade was the only policy for this country. Sir Robert Peel, even before 1841, professed that he had a general conviction of the truth of free trade principles, and the great tariff reform of 1842, which was the greatest work, Mr. Gladstone said, he ever had to perform, was based on the policy of removing restrictions. Here, again, there has been a great fallacy. It has been said that we entered upon a free trade policy because other nations were about to adopt it. Nothing of the kind. We did it despite other nations. Sir Robert Peel told the House of Commons that he had no guarantee to give that other nations would follow our example. We did it for reasons of our own, and simply in our own interest. The matchless Budget of 1853, brought forward by Mr. Gladstone, and the Budget of 1860, which I well remember hearing from the gallery of this House, were saturated with free trade principles. The right hon. Gentleman opposite spoke of a vital change, and referred to the fiscal policy which had been accepted by this country for fifty years, and which had also been accepted by his own party. That is perfectly true. We want to discuss this matter free from party. Free trade and protection have ceased to be party matters. I noticed the usual opposition to this declaration from the Member for Bristol, from the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Central Sheffield, but he has not read his history. The question of free trade and protection was settled in this House in November, 1852. Mr Villiers brought forward a Resolution affirming the adhesion of the House and the country to free trade. Mr. Disraeli was then Chancellor of the Exchequer and was unwilling to accept the precise words of Mr. Villiers. The Resolution was defeated by 256 votes to 336. Lord Palmerston moved a Resolution also affirming a free trade policy, which Mr. Disraeli accepted on behalf of the Government. The whole of the free traders, Liberals and Tories to the number of 465, supported it. The protectionist minority was fifty-three, a figure which I do not suppose will be reached to-night. The question was then absolutely and finally settled and removed beyond Party. It is not a Party question, and it will not be our fault if it becomes one. I am not speaking from mere reading in this matter. One of my immediate forefathers, whose name I bear, sat on these Benches during the struggle, and well do I recollect hearing from him a few years after of what took place at that time.

I turn now, in conclusion, to a matter which I wish to press on the attention of the Prime Minister. Does the right hon. Gentleman really think that he can, in this great matter, maintain the position he has taken up? He is Prime Minister of these realms. The country has a right to know, I was going to say the world has a right to know, but certainly our colonies have the right to know, what is the mind of the Government on this subject. We owe the whole position to the masterful impulses of one Minister and to the terrible nonchalance of another. The right hon. Gentleman owes it to the country that, before this debate closes, he should, so far as he can, make the position of the Government absolutely clear. The hon. Member for the Fareham Division said he had his constituents behind him. Well, that has to be proved in the case of each of us. So far as I am concerned, the sooner the test comes the better. Some of us will disappear from this House for ever. Some of us, if we desire it, will come back again. But I am convinced there are only two roads in this matter. One road is the road of protection, which will involve suspicion, distrust, and dislike abroad; and, at home, poverty, discontent, despair, possibly something worse, and above all a turning away from those things which are vital to the real welfare of the country. But if we take the road of the fiscal policy to which this country has adhered with most satisfactory results for fifty years, and lay aside this restless spirit of recent years, we may go forward in the path of progress at home, paying attention to those much needed social and industrial reforms, which, when carried into effect, will build up our nation. Abroad, we will resume our place among the nations without suspicion and without any idea of retaliation; and we will make the name of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in association with the free commonwealths of Australia, South Africa, and Canada, respected and beloved throughout the world.

SIR J. BLUNDELL MAPLE (Camberwell, Dulwich): I have listened to-day to a great many speeches, and I listened to many yesterday, but very few of the speeches I have heard in the course of this debate touch the subject matter before the House. The subject we have to discuss is the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford. I have no intention of dealing with the great fiscal policy of the country, upon which my opinions agree entirely with what I understand to be the opinion of the Colonial Secretary. I believe in free trade if we can have it in every nation on the earth, but I do not agree with it if we are to have free imports coming into our ports and paying no share of the taxes of this country. I was delighted when I found the Chancellor of the Exchequer was able to review in a satisfactory way the possibility of taking taxes off, and specially upon food. There is no doubt the late Chancellor of the Exchequer when he put on the tax last year was wise in putting it on. I believe that very little of this tax was borne by the consumers. A great deal of it was borne by the consignors of corn to this country. The whole question for the Cabinet is which is the best thing to do. Whether they should tax other things to be consumed or take the tax off wheat. We all recognise that whatever we do we must not make it more costly for the working classes of this country to live, but we are also aware of the fact that we are exacting £31,000,000 a year by the duties on sugar, tea, tobacco, and other exports coming into this country, which are paid by the consumers of this country. If you remove the tax on tea, which means a saving of 3d. a week to the working man's family, and that tax is put upon corn, which is equivalent to an increase of 2d., the working man would gain by the operation. He would therefore have nothing to complain of if he gained 1d., and if by an operation of this kind we were brought into closer connection with our colonies, he would be a greater gainer because more work would come into the country, by which he would benefit. The right hon. Member for Sleaford is of opinion that there are many who think with him that the Government would be wiser to take off some of the duty upon tea, and leave the duty on corn, but the Government have decided not to do so, and, they having done so, we cannot help ourselves.

I know that my right hon. friend intends to divide the House upon it, and I am sorry for that, because I cannot vote with him on this occasion, although my feelings are entirely in accord with his views. I feel that the Government have made a mistake, but I cannot vote for my right hon. friend upon an Amendment which, if successful, would only result in turning out the Government. The whole question of fiscal policy will be dealt with very soon, and I am sure when we review all these great questions it will be found to the advantage of the Empire if we can arrive at a fiscal policy which will suit the fiscal policy of our colonies, and which will not make it more difficult for the working man to live. The cheaper the labour and the cheaper the raw material the cheaper can the working man live. The Colonial Secretary said recently that we might have to tax raw materials. If we had to do so it would most surely follow that when we exported the finished article there would be a drawback upon it, and therefore the material would not be dearer. That brings me back to the case of bread. Biscuits are exported in large quantities, and on those biscuits exported the tax paid on the corn would be equalised by the allowance or drawback conceded. The study of the whole of the fiscal policies of the world points to the fact that very great success attends those countries where a system of protection is in force, or which, in other words, protect their workpeople, and if we adopt such a system, and at the same time do not increase the cost of living, our workpeople will be better off than they were before.

*MR. ASQUITH (Fifeshire, E.): I gather, so far as I am able from the speech of the hon. Baronet who has just sat down, that he finds his reason and his feelings in conflict one with the other, and, as it not infrequently happens when a conflict of that kind takes place in the human bosom, reason goes to the wall, and the hon. Gentleman proposes to follow the guidance of his feelings. That is a matter which he has to settle with his own conscience, and perhaps with his constituency. But my object in rising is to ask the attention of the House for a few moments to the situation which confronts us—a situation more grotesque, and, I venture to say, from a Parliamentary point of view, more indecent, than falls within the experience or the memory of the oldest Member of Parliament. How do we stand here? We have been engaged now for the best part of three sittings nominally and ostensibly in discussing the continuance of the corn tax; but, as a matter of fact, during the whole of that time every one has been thinking, and almost every speaker who has taken part in the debate has been talking, about something entirely different. I shall endeavour to keep strictly within the ruling which you, Mr. Speaker, have laid down. It is true that everyone prefaces his remarks with the expression of that pious intention; but, at all events, I will say this—that I will, so far as I can, avoid dealing with any topic which has not been the subject of reference or discussion in the course of these debates. More than that I am unable to promise.

As regards the corn tax, which, as I have said, is the immediate and ostensible subject of debate, it is to me at this moment—as I venture to think it is to ninety-nine out of every 100 Members who sit upon either side of the House—an unsolved and undecipherable mystery either why the Cabinet, as a Cabinet, imposed it last year, or why the Cabinet, as a Cabinet, are dropping it this year. Upon a simple question of fact, I have never known in this House such a multiplicity of irreconcilable versions from the persons, and the only persons, who are qualified to speak. Was the tax imposed last year mainly and primarily as a war tax, or was it imposed mainly and primarily as a first instalment in the process of enlarging the area of indirect taxation? I cannot say. But, Sir, the problems connected with the imposition of the tax are simplicity themselves compared with the problems connected with its abandonment. Why has it been abandoned? Is it because, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer told us yesterday, and I entirely agree with him, because it falls on the consumer—because, in other words, being a tax on the first necessary of life, it is an unnecessary burden which ought to be lifted at the earliest possible moment from the shoulders of the poorest class of the community? That is one theory of the abandonment of the tax which I can understand, follow, and appreciate. But is it being abandoned because, as the Colonial Secretary says, in a letter which he has recently addressed to a correspondent, and which is public property—

> "It does not fall in any way on the consumer,"

and because—

> "It has been met by a reduction of price and freights in the United States of America."?

In other words, is it being abandoned as a magnificent piece of international altruism, as a fresh demonstration of our love for our kinsmen across the Atlantic, to whom, according to this theory of the abandonment of the tax, we are going to make, out of the British Exchequer a present of £2,500,000? I should like to know which theory of the abandonment of the tax is the theory of His Majesty's Government, and particularly the theory of the Prime Minister. Those who, like myself, and like my right hon. and hon. friends who sit on this side of the House, opposed the imposition of the tax last year, naturally have listened not without complacency to the course of this debate. Every single argument that we used lsat year by way of prophecy, either as to the incidence or as to the effect of the tax, was last night demonstrated from that box by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the aid of carefully sifted and digested official figures, to have been absolutely justified by the event. Never, I venture to say, in Parliamentary history has an Opposition, small in number, impotent in the division lobby, been so rapidly and so completely vindicated out of the mouths of its opponents.

I am not going to trespass on the patience of the House by travelling again over this too familiar ground. I wish to refer to two larger questions which I hope, in accordance with the narrowest interpretation of the rules which govern our proceedings upon this very anomalous occasion, will be found to be strictly and even necessarily relevant to the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman opposite. The first question is this—and it is a question which I now address to His Majesty's Government, and as to which I hope before the debate is over we shall have an authoritative answer. Whatever may have been the motive, what is the intention of the Government in dropping this tax? Is it to be abolished or is it to be only hung up? It is dead; we all know it is dead. We are performing its funeral rites. But what is the word that you are going to carve on its tombstone? Is it *Requiescat* or is it *Resurgam*? That is the first question as to which I want an answer from the Government to-day. There is a second, and a still larger and more important one, and that is this. This is a tax on imported food, and upon that class of imported food which constitutes a staple of the first necessary of life for the bulk of our population. It is a sample, a type of a whole class of taxation, and you cannot, I venture to submit to the House, discuss the expediency or policy of the abandonment of this particular sample without considering the whole question as to whether or not it is a class of taxation which, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, it is politic or permissible to make a permanent part of our fiscal system. These are both questions as to which I venture to tell the Government the House of Commons cannot and will not be content with the confused and warring *dicta* of individual Ministers. They are entitled to, and they intend before the debate is over to get, the collective judgment, if there be one, of the Cabinet as a whole. Upon both the points to which I have referred, the Chancellor of the Exchequer last night made, if not wholly satisfactory, at any rate very reassuring declarations. He means, I gather from what he told us, to bury this tax beyond the hope or chance of resurrection; he is opposed to protective duties on foods in any shape or form. Very well; so far so good. But are these, or are they not, the views of His Majesty's Government? The right hon. Gentleman yesterday, in the earlier part of his speech, produced at that box and read to the House a very remarkable document. I have not seen it, of course; but so far as one could judge at this distance it appeared to be a record, I will not say of a treaty, but at any rate of a truce. But when the right hon. Gentleman came to the end of his recital I confess that for once—I think it is the first time in my Parliamentary experience—I shared the views of my hon. and gallant friend the Member for Central Sheffield, because, like him, I felt in a state of complete bewilderment and doubt as to what was the precise point in that document at which the right hon. Gentleman ceased to express his own personal views and began to express the collective views of his colleagues in the Cabinet. I listened most carefully, and I shall be very glad if even now he, or any of his colleagues, will supply the defects either of our hearing or our understanding and tell us exactly how we stand.

The bulk of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech was an elaborate, and I confess I thought a cogent and convincing refutation of the fallacies which the Colonial Secretary has recently been spreading abroad, not only about this corn tax, but about the whole class of taxation to which it belongs. I do not see the Colonial Secretary here now. [At this point Mr. Chamberlain entered the House, and took his place by the side of the Prime Minister.] I am glad to see the right hon. Gentleman has come in now. I think he was present last night during the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—a compliment which I observe Ministers do not always pay to one another—and I see the right hon. Gentleman—and I am glad to see it—still sits on that Bench. What are we to infer? The right hon. Gentleman heard a speech of his colleague, who, I must beg leave to remark, as Chancellor of the Exchequer is the person primarily responsible for the finances of this country, and, according to constitutional and Parliamentary usage, the authorised exponent of the fiscal policy of His Majesty's Government. The right hon. Gentleman heard that speech, and, as I say, he still sits on that Bench. Is he a convert to the views of the Chancellor of the Exchequer? Do we witness the always grateful spectacle of a brand plucked from the burning?—a backslider brought home again by the gentle and persuasive influence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the old fold from which, in days gone by, the right hon. Gentleman put forward such loud and edifying professions of the true, economic faith. If that is the true explanation of the phenomenon which we witness, I congratulate the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the unexpected success of an unusually arduous effort in the field of missionary work. But perhaps that is not the true explanation, and if not, I ask again how do we stand? The Chancellor of the Exchequer told us yesterday that some Ministers—I think that was the phrase he used—had been expressing individual opinions of their own in relation to this matter. Among the "some Ministers" to whom the right hon. Gentleman vaguely, I will not say contemptuously, alluded, I think the Prime Minister was included. This is a matter which goes far beyond the subject before the House of Commons—the removal or the continuance of the corn tax. Here we have two Ministers of the Crown seated at this moment upon that Bench, separated the one from the other only by the intervention of the Prime Minister himself. One of them, the Colonial Secretary, is the Minister who is constitutionally responsible for the management of the relations between this country and the outlying parts of the Empire; the other, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as I pointed out a moment ago, is the Minister responsible for the fiscal arrangements of the United Kingdom and a great part of the Empire. These two Ministers, if we are to abandon the genial, but, I am afraid, the not very probable hypothesis, which I ventured to put forward a few moments ago, of secret recantation and reconciliation—if they still remain of the same frame of mind in which they were two days ago—are here propounding fundamentally and irreconcilably divergent views in a matter which affects more vitally than any other matter in the whole range of politics the unity of the Empire and the fiscal arrangements and prosperity of the country.

We were told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer yesterday—and the Prime Minister adumbrated at any rate a similar view in a speech he made in this House just before the recess—that Ministers are entitled to hold and express independent opinions on questions of public policy. So they are. There is a large number of matters as to which, without any want of loyalty, without any breach of the obligations of Party, without any want of allegiance to the public duty which this country requires from its statesmen, Ministers may hold and express divergent views. And there is a number of other questions as to which they may invite discussion and inquiry, either by Committee, Commission, or any other instrument you please. If it is a question of the speed at which motor-cars shall be allowed to travel along the highways, or if it is a question of the number of decimals of an inch to which the linen collar of an officer may be allowed to be exposed by the War Office—that is a very fit subject for discussion and inquiry, and as to which Ministers, and Members of Parliament too, may very well claim to have an open mind. But we are not dealing with matters of that kind here. We are dealing here with a question which goes deep down to the very root of our national and our Imperial existence, and I say that it is not only without precedent or example, but an entire departure from the conditions and rules of our public life that in a matter of this kind important and responsible Ministers—the Ministers immediately and directly concerned—should be allowed not merely to emit on public platforms discordant opinions, but that they should pose as propagandists—that is what they do—of two wholly irreconcilable views of public policy, which one of them at any rate, declares he intends to make the cardinal issue at the next general election. That, to my mind, is the real significance of the situation, and I have risen for the purpose, in these few words, of uttering a protest not only on behalf of the Opposition but, I believe, on behalf of the vast majority of Members on both sides of this House against a practice which if it were once allowed would put an end to Ministerial responsibility and Cabinet Government.

MR. SEELY (Lincoln): While I congratulate the Government upon the courage they have shown in taking off this tax, I desire to put forward a few views on the situation which its imposition has produced. The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down said, and truly said, that this duty has shown more than almost anything in modern times how right were those who opposed its original imposition. It has borne out in every respect the opinions that were formed of it. I do not wish to go into a long controversy, which I thought had been settled, as to whether the tax is borne by the consumer or the producer. The figures given last night by the Chancellor of the Exchequer proved that; but we have had to-day and we shall have again, no doubt, assertions from one man or another that taxes of this kind can be imposed without injury to those who pay them, and that they will be borne entirely by the foreign producer. I should like to point out the history of this tax and how it has borne out what we said. We said it would make no alteration in the consumption of corn or in the production of corn in this country, and therefore it would make no alteration in the demand for foreign corn in this land. It has made no difference in the supply of corn to us. Even the most rabid protectionist has not asserted that this duty has affected the atmospheric conditions in the United States. For that reason it has made no difference whatever to the price of corn in our land, and the whole of that shilling, so far as we can understand, has been paid by the consumer of corn in this country. Although the facts have shown that we were correct on that point, that was only a small part of our objection to the tax. Our real objections were far greater, and the history of it has shown most conclusively how right we were in opposing it. In speaking on this question I would do so as a free trader and as one who has nothing to explain, one who has not to explain his past history in voting for a tax on food as a war tax, and should like to point out what are the principal lessons that we learned from it. The first lesson we got from this tax was the hostility of the people of this country to a tax on corn. We heard from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton last night the effect of it on by-elections, which to those who studied the subject showed that the people of this country objected to its imposition; and the objection was shown in the only manner open to them—viz., in an election. They clearly proved that its imposition, and still more any increase of it which would be the result of its maintenance, would meet with the most determined hostility from the people. How is the position of the Government affected by the imposition of this corn duty? How has it been affected by the proposal which we feel certain will be carried?

I do not agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Fife, or with those who have spoken from that bench, and many who have spoken on this side of the House, that the position of the Government is—I think the right hon. Gentleman said—grotesque and indecent. I cannot help feeling that, grave as is the position of affairs, difficult as it may be for individual Members of the Party and for Members of the Government, it is a position which, under all the circumstances of the case, is a reasonable, a possible, and a proper position. In opposing the tax last year one of the greatest objections made to it was that it would raise hopes and anticipations, not only in this country but throughout the world, with regard to alterations in our policy. I felt that it would raise hopes in the minds of our colonial brethren in every one of our colonies that they would get some personal advantage from the alteration in our policy, and therefore I was not surprised to find that the evils I feared have come to pass; although I did not expect they would come in so serious a form as they have come before the country. We have to take the facts as we find them. We have the one fact that the great industrial classes of this country, like the great industrial classes all over the world, are hostile to taxes being imposed on their food. I have seen it stated in the papers that other countries pay food taxes cheerfully. In France and Germany those interested in the production of food have a majority in the electoral machinery of the Government, and the industrial classes are hostile not only to that particular policy but are hostile largely to the whole constitution of society. You have in Germany taxes on food. In that country two-thirds of the industrial voters are socialists, and hostile to the whole conditions of society. Do you think it would be wise to risk the raising of the same frame of mind in the great industrial classes which form the vast majority of the population of this country? That is one thing you have to remember. Then you have the vast complexity and size of your foreign trade. You have the fact that numbers of your population are dependent upon it, and that makes it most undesirable and most objectionable for any sudden change to be made in your fiscal policy. What have you on the other side? For good or evil you passed this tax last year. You passed it in spite of the opposition of hon. Gentlemen opposite, and against the advice of many Members on this side of the House. It is done, and you have to face the effects of it. You have received from the colonies—not altogether definitely, but to a sufficiently large extent to enable you to understand it—a demand that through the medium of this corn tax they shall be given some advantage over their competitors in the production of corn and food. And what makes it still more serious is that you have had a declaration from the Colonial Secretary—the Minister especially in touch with those colonies—that in his opinion that demand is entitled to receive the careful consideration of the country. And you have had further the statement that in his opinion—so far as it goes—that policy would have his support.

Now, what policy are we to adopt? We have before us to-day the policy for the remitting and abolishing of this tax, and we have the policy of keeping it on. I feel confident that the policy which the Government are adopting in taking it off is the correct one, and I shall vote against the Amendment of the right hon. Member for Sleaford with the greatest pleasure on that ground, and also on the general objections I have always had to the tax. To-day we have a demand from the right hon. Member for East Fife, and from other hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who sit on that Front Bench, that the Government should make a definite declaration almost at the moment as to what their fiscal policy is to be—not with reference to the removal of this tax, but with reference to the future. I hope the Government will not accede to that demand. I feel positive—I am a free-trader and I have no fear whatever as to the results of any inquiry as to the question of free trade—that in our trade with our colonies, in our trade with foreign countries it is our system of free imports and our system of free food that we depend on, not only to feed our people, but also for the maintenance of our manufacturing supremacy, and I feel confident that whatever feeling has arisen it is largely due to misconception and mistake both as to the forces which govern the distribution of goods, and as to the facts of the matter concerned. I would suggest to the Government that there should be some inquiry into the real position of our trade with our colonies—into the real question which has been and is the main element in what has been raised by this tax—viz., the question of giving them a preference as against foreign countries. What is the present state of our trade? Is there anyone in this House who can confidently believe that he can say what the present state of trade with the colonies is?

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. The hon. Member is not in order in referring to that question.

Mr. SEELY: I have endeavoured to the best of my ability to remain within the bounds of order. I hope that His Majesty's Government will maintain the attitude they have adopted of declining to allow themselves to be led into maintaining the imposition of this corn tax, and I shall give them in repealing this tax my cordial support; and I am sure they will also have the cordial support of the vast industrial population of this country. I hope the Government will not be led away into giving a premature decision upon a question which is so grave and the importance of which everyone can realise. As to the result of an inquiry I have no doubt whatever, but I do not think a preliminary decision ought to be given without any inquiry, and without that knowledge which will come by the lapse of time in regard to taxes on corn and other matters connected with it, and in regard to the trade with our colonies. Such a decision I am sure would be fraught with evil to the Party and to the country, whose trade, and commerce, and people are committed to our charge.

Mr. SHACKLETON (Lancashire, Clitheroe): I feel some diffidence in rising this afternoon as a representative of trades unionists after what I read the other day in the letter written by the Colonial Secretary. I know that the opinion among the working men in Birmingham has changed, and upon the question of taxing the food of the people the labour party in Birmingham will give the electors an opportunity of declaring whether they will change their fiscal policy or their representative. We hail with pleasure the opportunity of fighting the next election upon the question of taxing the food of the people. Something has been said as to who pays this tax. Coming from Lancashire I can assure this House that nine-tenths of the common food of the people is baked by the wives in their homes, and on the admission of all hon. Gentlemen and right hon. Gentlemen in this debate there is no dispute that flour has increased in price; and if nine-tenths of them have had to pay the increased price of flour they must have paid something towards that £2,500,000. Take the increased price of bread. I notice that reference is always made to the 4 lb. loaf, but the 4 lb. loaf is scarcely ever seen in Lancashire, and what is seen is nominally the 2 lb. loaf. The figures given last night by the hon. Member for Bury show that in no single instance has there been a decrease in price, but in several instances there has been an increase, and those statistics were given by the Board of Trade Labour Department. I will give another instance to show that an increase in price can come about without the Board of Trade knowing anything about it. It is a case which occurred in my own district. It is a well-known fact that bakers need not say how much bread they are giving for the price they charge. All they need to do is to hold the scales in such a position that the purchaser can see the weight. In case of dispute all the seller needs to show is that the scale was open to the eyes of the purchaser. In one case a boy was sent to purchase a loaf, and he stood at the counter with a row of bottles in front of him, and he could see the end of the scales with the loaf on it but not the end where the weight was. On that point alone the seller was fined heavily for deceiving the public. It is altogether forgotten that the baker has a right to take off two ounces in the weight, and that is done to a large extent in many Lancashire districts. There is no sum payable in the coin of the realm small enough to represent this tax on bread, but the baker gets the difference in other ways. Something was said by the hon. Member for Newcastle upon this matter, and I made an audible smile when he referred to 30 per cent. of the workers living below the living wage limit. I did not smile at that statement, because I have lived too long myself near the border line to laugh at that, but what I was laughing at was the remedy of tightening your waistbelt for the hungry belly. That is not the policy working men will accept, but it is the policy which my hon. friend supports when he votes for a tax on bread. When this matter is thoroughly understood by the working men of this country they will want something different to a policy of tightening up the belt.

Something has been said in this debate about the condition of labour in America. Upon this question I speak from investigations made by myself and six other gentlemen representing employers in Lancashire. At their invitation I went as a representative operative to consider the conditions of the cotton trade in America. Just twelve months ago to-day I returned, and the facts I obtained there along with my colleagues are fresh in my mind. I would sooner deal with this question of the condition of labour abroad from what I have seen myself than from statistics quoted in this House. I will take the cotton centre of the Northern States of America. There the wages are higher but the hours are longer, and that fact never seems to be mentioned here. The hours of labour in Lancashire are fifty-five per week, but in Rhode Island they are sixty per week. Again, the piece-work rate paid by employers in America is less than in Lancashire, and the reason why they earn higher wages in America is on account of the longer hours and other circumstances of a technical character which I should not be permitted to go into now, and which only those closely acquainted with the cotton trade can understand. It is sufficient to say that the actual piece-work rate paid by the American cotton manufacturers is lower for all general goods than the price paid by the Lancashire employers. But that is not the worst aspect of the case. Hon. Members must remember that there is a Southern State in America as well as a Northern. One thousand miles lower down in the country, many miles nearer the cotton, mills have been built, and there, instead of receiving wages equal to the Lancashire operatives, they receive less wages and work from sixty-nine to seventy-two hours per week. I came back from my visit to America content to remain a Britisher. My advice to working men is that we can give you better conditions of labour in our own country than you will find in America in the cotton trade.

The hon. Member for Newcastle asked me if I should be prepared to consider this important question of a tax on food if the facts given by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University could be substantiated. In reply to that I would say that we have not had the opportunity of putting before the House some of the remedies that we desire as a Labour Party, and after we have tried these and find that we have no other remedy left, then we will consider how far it will affect us to adopt the suggestion which has been made. I may say that some of the moves we have made have been checkmated by monopolies; the result of cheap trains has been increased rents, and the result of cheap trams established by the London County Council has been increased rents. We have to deal with the monopolists in these cases, and we want a Government which is willing to support such things as the municipalisation of artisans' dwellings. When we have tried some of the sensible schemes to improve the condition of our people, then we may consider such propositions as have been put forward to put a tax on the food of the people. During the last three years in Lancashire the cost of living has gone up 10 per cent., and not a single penny has come to the operative in the shape of increased wages. I can prove this statement by figures from private traders, co-operative societies and other classes, and I can show that at the same time not a single penny has been added to the wages of the workers. You must prove to us that an increase in the price of food is followed, or rather preceded, by an increase of wages. What are some of the reasons why the conditions are not operative? If the hon. Member listened to the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University, he will have noticed that he cut the community up into different portions. First there were those above the working class scale—persons receiving incomes from other sources than labour, namely, from the investment of capital. Then there were those receiving above the limit of the standard wage. How did the right hon. Gentleman explain that they were receiving above the limit. He said it was due to organisation. You find those above the limit of the standard wage to be among the class who have had an opportunity of organising and getting from their employers a standard of living above those who are not organised. Do you think that the dock labourers would work for 19s., 20s., or 21s. a week if they had full opportunity of organisation? Nothing of the kind. It is a well-known fact that in the naval department these men are not allowed an opportunity of organisation, which is the first effective condition for the improvement of the people.

SIR EDGAR VINCENT (Exeter): The history of the corn tax reminds me of those persons in former times who, after brief and inglorious careers, became celebrated from the funeral orations pronounced over them. The general characteristic of these orations was that they contained very small mention of the merits or defects of the deceased. I think that is the character of many of the speeches we have heard. The story of this tax is particularly curious. It was created through a misapprehension to meet the necessities of an expenditure which never occurred. As soon as it came into the world it was stolen from its free trade authors and brought up in the protectionist camp. I think it has brought nothing but embarrassment to its parents, confusion to its sponsors, and disappointment to those who were foolish enough to believe in it. The debate has been remarkable. It is a debate which will be long remembered, more particularly on account of two declarations of the highest importance we heard yesterday. I venture to congratulate the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the firmness which he has shown in insisting upon the repeal of this tax, and still more upon his clear declaration in favour of Free Trade. I venture also to congratulate the late Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the courage which he showed in sacrificing his own child in order not to associate himself with those whose fiscal policy he detests. I hope the intervention of the right hon. Gentleman will be followed by vigorous and persistent action, and I can assure him he will find on these benches many who welcome his lead on financial subjects with enthusiasm and confidence. I hope he will succeed in making his voice heard in the direction of sound finance and economical administration to a more successful extent than it was apparently heard during his tenure of office.

I have heard with some surprise, in the course of this debate, that the imposition of the corn tax, which has brought £2,500,000 into the Exchequer, has made no difference in the retail price to the consumer. I should like to ask those Members who support this contention whether that is due to something special in the nature and character of corn, or whether it is not more due to the fact that the duty only represents a charge of 4 or 5 per cent. upon the prime cost. If there is nothing special and peculiar in corn, then it appears to me that what applies to corn also applies to every article of large and general consumption. If the registration duty on corn is justifiable why should we stop at corn, and not advocate a registration duty all round, upon meat and provisions of every kind? If this article is not affected by the import duty, because the duty is only 4 or 5 per cent., I would ask to what extent can you tax an article imported into this country without altering its price to the consumer? Inquiry is surely of the very essence of a proper comprehension of the very elements of financial administration, and if 5 per cent. duty is not a burden upon the consumer, what would be the result of a duty of 10, 15, or 20 per cent? Would the whole of it be paid by the consumer, or would he only pay the balance after the deduction of the £2,500,000, which it is contended comes out of the pockets of the foreigners? It is not sufficient to assert that the consumer pays nothing, merely because we desire him to consent to the imposition of a tax. You must construct some logical system that applies to all cases, and show reason why this money which comes into the Treasury is not paid by the consumer. It amounts to this, that if you multiply a duty without bringing in new classes of contributors to the taxation, you are making an unnecessary increase to the fiscal arrangements of the country. It has been often contended that this corn tax is to be advocated on the ground that it largely increases the area and basis of taxation. It appears me that if we go beneath the sound of words and look into their real meaning, it will be found that the cry of the desirability of increasing the area of taxation rested upon no solid foundation, and was very much like clap-trap. Is it contended that, under present circumstances, any class of the community escapes contribution to the national revenue to an undue extent? I have not seen that view put forward except anonymously, and I have not seen it supported by figures or anything but the most fantastic classification of our taxes. If by adding a new tax you leave the burden on precisely the same shoulders on which it lay before, you have not increased the area or efficiency of the fiscal system. It may be asserted that by adding corn you have brought into the fiscal net certain persons who would not otherwise have been laid under contribution. Who are those persons? It appears to me to be shown absolutely beyond dispute that they represent the poorest class of the community, those least able to stand the new charge. It means that you duplicate the machinery in order to grind closer, and by grinding closer you press more severely upon the poorest, and those least competent to bear taxation. Quite apart from any result you might arrive at from a study of the probable effect of the tax, it seems to be open to some suspicion on account of the character of its supporters. There is another section perhaps less inclined to make themselves heard, who advocate any measure which will maintain a high level of national expenditure. These two groups will be often found working hand in hand. It is of the highest importance that those who take a more sober view of our national policy should not allow the public to be misled by the catchword of this confederation. It is their duty to probe their theories to the bottom and not allow them to affect the legislation or the policy of the country, unless their arguments will stand the strictest and most business-like analysis.

*MR. MCCRAE (Edinburgh, E.): Some years ago an historic encounter took place across the floor of this House between the late Lord Randolph Churchill and the present Colonial Secretary, and Lord Randolph Churchill congratulated himself on his success in drawing the badger. Well, it appears to me that during these sittings the majority of hon. and right hon. Members who have spoken from both sides of the House have been engaged in the same occupation. The cry for more light is not confined to members of the Opposition, but is heard also from the Government benches, and I think we are entitled to know the position of the Cabinet in regard to this matter. I congratulate the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the remission of the corn tax. I think I may say that when his appointment was made it received the unanimous assent of the House, and those on this side of the House looked forward to his promotion to his high position with hope and expectation. That expectation has not been disappointed; but I think there was one sentence in the speech which the right hon. Gentleman made in introducing the Budget—a very significant sentence, which has not received the attention which it has deserved. It is a sentence which might have been supplied by the Colonial Secretary, or the Prime Minister; and it is to this effect:—

"I do not think the corn tax can remain permanently an integral portion of our fiscal system, unless in connection with some radical change in our economic policy, or with some boon much desired by the working classes."

We want to know whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer in speaking thus was merely "blowing off steam," whether it was mere rhetoric, or whether there was behind that statement preferential tariffs, and old-age pensions, however inconsistent it might appear with the speech which the right hon. Gentleman made yesterday. The proposal before the House is for the repeal of the corn tax, and the House and the country are entitled to know what is the fiscal policy of the Government. We have asked that over and over again in the course of the debate; but it is evident that theirs is a policy of the open mind and the closed lips. This tax was proposed by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer only a year ago to broaden the basis of taxation. We on this side of the House admired the splendid courage and rare ability with which the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, under circumstances of unparalleled difficulty, fought his battle. He elicited the admiration of his opponents. He asserted, and no one doubted his sincerity, that this corn tax was put on for revenue purposes, that there was no protection in it. I think that even the right hon. Gentleman himself must be convinced now that he was wrong. In proposing the tax the right hon. Gentleman denounced in the strongest possible manner, even the possibility of its being used for the purpose of preferential tariffs, and how strong his reasons are against the policy which he now sees foreshadowed is evidenced by the fact that yesterday he declared that he was prepared to reverse his own well considered and clearly defined policy. Now, we on this side of the House welcome the reversal of that policy. We support the remission of that tax on the food of the people. We believe that it was an unjust and mistaken departure from the principles of sound taxation; and in supporting the Government, as we are prepared to do, we are entitled to ask whether the Cabinet have finally made up their mind on its abolition; whether they are going to stick to it as a settled policy?

In spite of the limitations of the debate, we are, after all, during these two days making history, although the Government are apparently unconcious of it, and the Prime Minister knoweth it not. In this Finance Bill we are settling the fiscal policy of the country. We know how important it is that we should have continuity in that fiscal policy. We are often told that it is of great importance to have continuity in our foreign policy, but it is quite as important to secure continuity in our fiscal policy. We cannot play fast and loose with it. Any attempt to re-introduce this corn tax on any pretext whatever is bound to disorganise our trade, to hamper our industry, and to dislocate the money market. It has been asserted that this tax has not been paid by the consumer. Ask the housewife who bakes her own bread in the north of England; ask the housewife in the poorer districts of the city of London, where to this day she pays a halfpenny per loaf more than before the tax was imposed. Where the margin has been the smallest, there has been the biggest increase, and the sufferings have been the greatest. The laws of political economy as well as common sense prove that a tax on food must increase its price. But the Colonial Secretary has said that if we pay more for the means of subsistence, it will be more than counterbalanced by the rise in wages. His words were—

> "But even if the price of food is raised, the rate of wages will certainly be raised in greater proportion."

I admit that the Colonial Secretary has the support, for that doctrine, of certain political economists who have declared that that is so under given conditions; but does the history of this country support that contention? No, it does not. If the House will allow me I will make a quotation from a speech made by one of the greatest, if not the greatest Finance Minister this country ever had, Mr. Gladstone. I regret that my hon. friend the Member for West Islington taunted a right hon. Member on the other side of the House for quoting Mr. Gladstone; I think right hon. Gentlemen should rather be commended for so doing. The more hon. and right hon. Gentlemen read and study the speeches of that great statesmen the more hope there will be of their political salvation, even on Home Rule. What was it that Mr. Gladstone said?—

> "I had occasion," he said, "to refer to this subject recently, and to state that in the year 1812, when there were protective duties upon foreign corn, the British workman paid for the bread, on which he depended for the subsistence of his wife and family, five times the price which of late years he has paid for it, and the wages out of which he paid that price, strange as it may appear, were, I believe, half, or less than half, of the wages he now receives."

Now the lesson of history has been, so far as this country is concerned, that dear food means low wages. But I rejoice at the proposal to repeal the tax for another reason. The importance of free imports into this country can hardly be overestimated, even for political reasons, reasons of high politics. I do not refer to the fact that freedom of trade between nations is in the interests of peace; but take our position with the United States of America. Our imports from the United States surpass those of any other country. They are a fourth of our whole import trade, and food stuffs bear a large ratio to the whole. Last year, I find from the Blue-book issued the other day, that the flour and wheat imported into this country amounted to 108,000,000 cwts., and if maize, barley, and oats are taken, it amounted in all to 200,000,000 cwts., and of this amount 65,000,000 cwts., came from the United States. Now let the House consider what would happen in the case of a great European war. I have great faith in the solidarity of the English speaking race, and in the cementing of the two peoples by ties of blood; but, after all, self interest plays an important part in national policy. Can we doubt that the more trade there is between this country and the United States the more likely will the material interests of the United States affect her policy and determine her attitude, should there be a great European war? How vital this would be to this country in a great crisis need not be pointed out.

There is another argument I would urge in favour of the repeal of the tax and against the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford, and it is this. Some of those who are against the repeal of this tax wish to retain it so as to enable us to give a preference to our own colonies. Now, the Liberal party have a paternal interest in our colonies. When the Party opposite, whose views were at the time expounded by Lord Beaconsfield, then Mr. Disraeli, declared that our colonies were "a millstone round our necks," the Liberal party stood by our colonies, and we are now prepared, nay, are bound, to give them moral and, in the last resort, physical support. There are some statesmen who seem to be in a high state of colonial fever at the present time, and, as not unfrequently happens under such conditions, they see visions and dream dreams of a new Jerusalem, where the laws of political economy and of supply and demand are of the earth earthy. But the average citizens who walk in a humbler sphere, and do their daily work and earn their daily bread, are much more prosaic, and have not yet attained to those giddy heights. I am pretty sure that the British people will make short shrift of any statesman who, with free trade on his lips, and protection in his heart, is prepared to experiment with the great fiscal system of this country. I appeal to the Prime Minister to declare as to which of the two voices he is going to listen. It was said that in the wash-tub of democracy the colours were inclined to run; but I think that even the great Unionist colours are not quite fast. The party is divided in opinion on this great question. I remember the Prime Minister two years ago taunting my right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition with having two voices. Where did the two voices come from now? Surely the House and the country are entitled to have a clear statement from the Prime Minister. Does he, or does he not, support the policy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer? The Government have taken a new departure in repealing this tax. We hope they have taken it after deliberation, and that they are prepared to adhere to a policy of free trade. We hope the Prime Minister will make that perfectly clear when he replies. Any other course would be a repudiation of Cabinet responsibility. It would reduce Parliamentary Government to a farce and put the Prime Minister of this country in a position of the greatest possible humiliation. No, Sir, we cannot hang this question up. That would be a proceeding most disastrous to our commerce. It would sterilise our trading position in the markets of the world. The Government are hopelessly divided on a question of principle which is vital to the prosperity of the nation. The discussion yesterday showed that on a most important public question the two most important members of the Government are in a position of splendid isolation. I think I see the two right hon. Gentlemen standing on the sea-shore, a barque waiting for them, and hear them humming Tennyson's beautiful poem:—

> "Sunset and evening star
> And one clear call for me,
> And may there be no moaning of the bar
> When I put out to sea.
>
> Twilight and evening bell,
> And after that the dark,
> And may there be no sadness of farewell
> When I embark."

If they want to cross the bar, why do they not do it? I am perfectly confident that the people of these Islands will not entrust the treasure of the British Empire to the frail and rotten craft of protection.

MR. GRIFFITH BOSCAWEN (Kent, Tunbridge): Like every other speaker who has ventured to address the House in the debate, I find myself in a position of the greatest difficulty. We are discussing a question which is important in itself, but which absolutely pales into insignificance compared with the much greater question about which we are all thinking, and which we are endeavouring not to talk about. For my part, Mr. Speaker, I shall endeavour to conform to your ruling both in the letter and the spirit. I said we were in a difficult position. We heard just now a very remarkable speech from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Fife. I do not often agree with that right hon. Gentleman; but I am bound to say that this afternoon I agreed with the greater part of his speech. He told us that the position was a grotesque position. It may be a grotesque position for him and right hon. Gentlemen opposite; but for hon. Members on this side it is an absolutely harrowing position. I do not say that we do not know where we are; but we do not know where the Government is whose followers we are. We see a policy enunciated, a policy which, for my part, I entirely and enthusiastically agree with—a policy of preferential tariffs; and we see the one tax which now exists, and which may be used for the purpose of accomplishing Imperial tariffs, thrown away at the very moment when a new policy is inaugurated. The Government are abandoning the one weapon they possess of making Imperial tariffs a possibility. We do not in the least know, when we are told that there is to be an inquiry, whether it is one which is to be gone into with the honest and straightforward desire to find out the truth, or gone into, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer seems to suggest, with preconceived opinions and with the idea that the result is already known. We cannot for the life of us reconcile the opinions expressed by the Colonial Secretary with the opinions expressed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and we cannot reconcile the policy of the Government this year with the policy of the Government last year. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Fife said he could not, for the life of him, see why this tax was put on, and why it was now taken off. I certainly did think I knew why it was put on. I have long been a follower of the right hon. Gentleman the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I believe the tax was put on as a permanent addition to our basis of taxation, and for the permanent broadening of that basis. I remember in Committee on the Finance Bill last year, the hon. Member for Northampton moved an Amendment which proposed to limit the tax to one year. What was the answer of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and of the whole Government? It was that it would be most absurd and most detrimental to trade to put on a tax of this nature for one year and limit it to one year. The then Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the tax was intended by him not merely in order to make a contribution towards the war expenditure of the year, but also in order that there should be a permanent widening of the basis of taxation. What is the position of hon. Members like myself who have gone about the country defending the Government and defending this tax? We have said that the tax did not fall on the consumer. I do not believe it does. Now, the Chancellor of the Exchequer says that it does; and that for that reason he has taken it off. We have talked about the heads of indirect taxation as being too few; and we said what a splendid thing it was to make this permanent addition to these heads. Now, when we have successfully taken that view in the country, we are thrown over; and this tax which was put on to be permanent, and a Motion to restrict which to one year was defeated by the whole force of the Government, is to be repealed. I confess myself in the very gravest difficulty.

I supported this tax last year for many reasons. The principal reason, I candidly admit, was that I did regard it as the first stepping-stone towards preferential tariffs: and I defended the tax because it was not, in my opinion, and I think also in the opinion of the Government then, a tax which would fall upon the consumer. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer now says that the tax does fall on the consumer; and that he must take it off because he must remove something paid on the necessaries of life by the great masses of the population. Whether the tax does in any degree whatever fall on the consumer is exceedingly difficult to say. But the matter is even more difficult, because Government statistics on this very point differ in the most extraordinary manner. I have here two documents which I commend to the attention of the Government. They are copies of the *Labour Gazette* for December, 1902, and January, 1903. The price of the loaf is given in both. In April, 1902, shortly before the tax was put on, the price of the loaf is given at from 5d. to 5½d. In December of that year it is given at 5d., which showed that there had been no serious rise in the price of bread. Apparently the statistician of the Labour Department, either anticipating the extraordinary change of front on the part of the Government, or for some other occult reason, changed his opinion between December and January. In the January *Gazette* he put the price of the loaf in April of last year at from 3½d. to 4½d. and he put it in January of this year at from 4½d. to 5d.; therefore showing that although there had been no rise between April and December last year, there was an enormous rise between April of last year and January of this year. In the two issues of this Government publication the price of the loaf in April of last year was changed from 5d. to 5½d. to from 3½d. to 4d. Under these circumstances it is almost impossible for any private Member or, indeed, any Member of the Government, to ascertain what is the incidence of this tax. For my part, I regard it as merely a registration duty. It was a registration duty in the palmy days of free trade, and was far too small to affect the price of the loaf at all. Our market being a neutral market into which foreign growers wished to pour their supplies every year, the tax was paid by the foreign producer or by the foreign railway company or steamship company. In any case the increase in the price of the loaf has been so absolutely trifling as to render it quite unnecessary for the Government to make this extraordinary change of front, thereby putting themselves and their supporters into a most difficult position, and interfering with trade in a manner which, I think, no Government has interfered with it for very many years.

I am told — I do not believe it — that this tax has been taken off because the Party wirepullers found it was unpopular. I hope there is no truth in that; but if there is the slightest truth in it, I would venture to make one remark regarding it. If the repeal of this tax is an electioneering matter, it is very bad electioneering. It will not gain the support of a single man who opposed the tax, and it will lose the support of every man who approved of it. I go further. This is a tax which, say what you will, brought into the Treasury £2,500,000 a year. We live in times of very high expenditure. I do not care whether it is for the Army, or the Navy, or education, expenditure is going up. Here was a tax producing £2,500,000 which it is impossible to prove was paid by consumers in this country. Is it wise to throw it away? Would it not be wiser to retain it for Supplementary Estimates; or, if it were not thought necessary or right to keep such a large sum in hand, how much better it would be to remit the duty on tea, or some other article, paid by the working classes, the effect of which would be felt. They will not benefit by the repeal the of corn tax; and I do not understand why it is to be taken off. I venture to make one last appeal to the Prime Minister. We have introduced deputations to him and have presented testimonials—perhaps that is not quite the proper word—we have presented memoranda to him and we have endeavoured by every legitimate means to persuade him to reconsider his decision. I venture to say he finds the difficulty he is placed in infinitely greater than it would have been if he had listened to us. The great question of preferential tariffs has been raised and the position of the Government has become illogical. Once more I would make an appeal to the Prime Minister, and if that is unsuccessful we are once more placed in a difficulty, for if we vote with the Government in this case we vote for the repeal of a tax which we think ought not to be repealed, and if we vote for the Amendment we vote against a Budget in which we believe. The Prime Minister must see that we are placed in a most difficult position, and, loyal as we are, our loyalty is confused by the fact that we do not know to what part of the Government our loyalty is mostly due. One Member in the lobby asked me if I was going to support the Ministers. I said I was going to support some of them because it was quite impossible to support some without condemning others. I hope the Government will reconsider this question.

SIR EDWARD GREY (Northumberland, Berwick): I am very conscious that, though I differ from the hon. Member who has just spoken with regard to his general views of fiscal policy, I rise, in the first place, to offer him my sympathy in the situation in which he finds himself and to join in the appeal which has been made to the Government to clear the situation up. The situation, which is harrowing for him, is inconvenient for all of us. We have got a very simple issue before the House. One hon. Member has said that the debate has been unreal, and another hon. Member said that it had been interesting. I agree that it has been an interesting debate and also that it has been an extraordinary and perilous debate. Why? Not because the actual issue is simple, but because the situation which the Government have created is so impossible and intolerable. It has been said over and over again that we have one issue before us, though all of us have the larger question in our minds. I will endeavour, as we have all endeavoured, to succeed in making all I wish to say relevant to the simple issue. Let me begin first of all by saying that I shall not spend much time on the smaller points connected with it, and upon whom the corn duty has fallen. If we are honest in our own minds we must admit that whatever may be the temporary incidence of a small tax for a short time—the Government are not agreed about the temporary incidence of the tax, though the last and most official figures show that it has fallen on the consumer—in the long run it must fall on the consumer. To suppose that a shilling tax is not going to affect the price of bread, to say that it cannot affect the price, is one of those quaint dialectical conceits which it is impossible to pursue. I therefore support the repeal of this duty because it must fall on the consumer; but I do not wish to argue my case on simple doctrinaire grounds. An hon. Member opposite complained that those of us who supported the repeal of the duty, and in consequence were in opposition to the larger proposals of the Colonial Secretary, were bringing forward doctrinaire arguments without proof. The onus of proof is on the other side, on those who state that a tax on food which is liable to raise the price of food will yet bring higher wages. The onus of proof is on those who make that statement, and not on those who, like us, adhere to the principles of free trade. We adhere to free trade not because we are doctrinaires. My attachment to free trade is not due to a belief in the superficial virtue of the doctrine, but because of my intense belief in the mischief of any other system, a mischief which threatens to be greater now than ever before. Conditions of trade have changed in the last fifty years. Trade is done in larger quantities with smaller margins of profit, and the danger of disturbance and collapse by arbitrary interference is greater now than ever before.

The right hon. Member for Cambridge University last night more than once referred to the danger to the condition of the people created by a tax on food, and I agree with him that the condition of the people from that point of view should be one of our first considerations. The right hon. Gentleman dwelt with great emphasis on the mischief and the suffering which might be caused by even a small rise in the price of food. That is true, and I think the right hon. Gentleman put it also on Imperial grounds. It is most emphatically true on Imperial grounds. This country is the heart and centre of the Empire, and if you are going to embark on large changes, if you are to continue in the policy which we have before us at the moment, you are, in my opinion, going to engage in a wild and vague attempt to increase the vigour of the limbs by depressing the vitality of the action at the centre. If we want a serious argument on this point it is to be found in what has been said as to the effect on the condition of the people in connection with this particular tax. The right hon. Member for Cambridge University, in emphasising this point last night, used some strong language to the effect that if the House really knew the condition of the children in our schools it would be apprehensive of real degeneracy, physical and moral, setting in in the population. That is a very serious statement. There, if you like, is a fair case for inquiry. When I hear statements made by one possessing the knowledge of the right hon. Gentleman, I ask myself is that result due to the congestion of our great towns and the depopulation of the rural areas? It is a very serious question, and when hon. Members opposite, representing a section, at any rate, of the agricultural party, acclaim a tax of this kind, on the ground that it is to be a benefit to the rural districts, that it will help to bring the people back to the land to continue such a tax, they would have a much stronger argument than any they have adduced. It might be possible to bring the people back to the rural districts by a tax on corn, but the tax must be so high as to affect the price of food to a degree which would work incalculably greater mischief than the advantage you would derive from the comparatively small return you would obtain. I have long dwelt on the subject and I believe the real remedy is in the direction of such small holdings as those which the hon. Member for Bordesley has indicated, and not in tampering with the fiscal system. I mention that point because I would not have it supposed that any of us who object to the imposition of such a corn duty as this are indifferent to the larger question of the condition of the people, which is possibly bound up with the depopulation of our rural districts. We are asked now to support the repeal of the duty on corn. Last year we opposed it. I for one opposed it last year specifically on the ground that, apart from the mischief it might work, it was bound to lead to a demand from the colonies for preferential tariffs, and that it would be very difficult for the Government to refuse. I remember arguing that this duty might be represented in the colonies as being for the first time a differential duty in favour of the British producer and against the colonial producer, that this tax was certain to lead to a system of preferential tariffs, and that it would change the whole of our fiscal policy. I did not get very much sympathy from the right hon. Member for West Bristol at the time, but I should like cordially to say that, though I opposed him at the time, I infinitely prefer the manner in which he proposed this tax to the House to the manner in which the Government are now engaged in repealing it. The right hon. Gentleman did not endorse our apprehensions with regard to preferential tariffs, and he considered it to be a safe tax to impose. He put it before the House as a revenue duty solely, a legitimate, useful, permanent source of revenue from his point of view. Why does he now support its discontinuance? Because he has come to see that he cannot trust his late colleagues.

The issue is, or ought to be, simple—whether the tax shall be discontinued or not. We ought to have to vote simply on that, and there would be the end of it. But is that to be the end? Or is it to be the beginning of something worse? The Secretary to the Treasury, in an earnest speech last night besought us to concentrate upon the extreme simplicity and straightforwardness of the Budget. I was struck by the extreme simplicity of my hon. friend He spoke as if there were nothing but the Budget in his mind. We cannot keep other things from our minds. He spoke as an out-and-out free trader, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke as a "convinced free trader." But what is their position as free traders? Are they comfortable in the overnment? Are they to sit by announcing their adhesion to free trade, while some of their most important colleagues are parading free trade with a halter round its neck up and down the country? Is the Chancellor of the Exchequer to stop at the declaration which he read to the House yesterday? Is he—if I may carry further the metaphor of my right hon. friend the Member for East Fifeshire—to confine his missionary enterprise to his colleagues and to sit still while his colleagues, or some of them, go about arguing strongly against free trade? Is he to be content with the declaration which he made to the House, or is he to go into the country and argue on the other side? Ministers have not merely to express their own opinions; they have to educate the country. The Colonial Secretary, from his point of view, is not backward. The Chancellor of the Exchequer cannot rest content with a simple declaration; he must embark in argument on the other side.

There is to be an inquiry, it is said. We get no answer to the question; by whom is the inquiry to be made, and what is its nature to be? It is not a dignified position for the Cabinet to say that they have no mind on a question of the kind until they have had an inquiry. Before they raise an issue like this they should have their inquiry, and then speak in public when they have a mind. But are they waiting for the mind of the country or for their own mind? One form of inquiry is debate in this House—a most educative process. That it is impossible to have at the present moment, or to have at all unless the Government will give facilities. Another form of inquiry upon a matter of broad principle is a dissolution and an appeal to the country. But I understand that the Prime Minister deprecates either of these as being suitable methods of inquiry. The hon. and gallant Member for the Fareham Division of Hampshire asks for calm and quiet discussion. Debate in this House is not always calm and quiet, and a dissolution is never calm and quiet. But is the inquiry which the Colonial Secretary is instituting calm and quiet? It is not an inquiry; it is a crusade—a crusade in which we now understand that the members of the same Cabinet are to take different sides. This duty is to be dropped; but it is made perfectly clear to us that important Members of the Cabinet are not going to let the matter rest there, but are going to do their utmost to get from the country its sanction to the imposition of duties of this kind on a much larger scale. The seriousness of this is that if you depart from your present fiscal policy, and if the Government gets a majority to sanction the policy of preferential tariffs, a few years after that has been done, you will have taken an irretrievable step. If the preference for the colonies is once given and withdrawn, then you will indeed break up the Empire. Establish these duties, call them "retaliatory" or "preferential," and in a few years they will become protective duties. This duty has already become protective, so we are told, as far as the milling industry is concerned, and what has happened on a small scale in twelve months shows us what will happen on a much larger scale in a few years. I would join in the powerful appeal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol. Is this situation which the Government have created fair to themselves as a Government or as a Party? Is it fair to the country as a whole? Is it really possible that the Government can go on as a Government engaged in this crusade to educate the country in different ways? Is it possible that the Prime Minister does not see that to have agreed to one of his colleagues—and such a colleague as the Colonial Secretary—stating publicly that it might be their intention to make this the issue at the coming election, is to have made an impossible situation? I fully admit that the Government were entitled to raise this issue. But, having raised the issue, they are not entitled to hang the issue up. As a Party, we on this side of the House suffer less from the situation than hon. Members opposite. But if we feel it inconvenient, and if they feel it harrowing, surely then we may join in an appeal from the whole House to the Government that they, having raised this issue, will not longer leave it in suspense, or, at any rate, will not leave their own mind as a Government in suspense?

MR. CRIPPS (Lancashire, Stretford): I agree that the question of fiscal policy which has been raised is one of the most important matters that possibly could be raised. As regards the corn tax, I feel that so much has already been said that I need say only one or two words. I am one of those who supportod it because I thought it was not inconsistent with the principles of free trade—and I still hold that view—to propose such a tax for revenue purposes although incidentally it might have a protective result. What we have to look at as regards a proposal for revenue is whether the tax is one which can be raised with a minimum of industrial dislocation, and of which the burden in the case of a war tax should be distributed as widely as possible. On that basis I think the corn tax did comply with all the conditions which we ought to consider when treating with a new tax for revenue purposes, and that it was more than justified on free trade grounds by what was said by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer. As regards the repeal of the tax I am in favour of it on two grounds. First of all, when a very large amount is taken off the Income Tax there ought to be some corresponding remission as regards indirect taxation, and I think it would have been a matter of deep regret—I speak as an economist—if when we all want, if possible, to reduce the amount of public expenditure, a tax of this kind had been left as a margin for the Government to play with, instead of being taken off as one of the best guarantees of economy. Of course, it is for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say whether or not he has left a sufficient margin. From my point of view I think the margin ought to be kept as narrow as possible, because when you have a narrow margin it is a great incentive to economy, and I do fear, in spite of the efforts of the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for West Bristol, when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, there will be a constant tendency to increased expenditure which is one of the worst injuries which in the long run can possibly overtake a great industrial country. As regards the question of the remission of the tax, therefore, if the question was between taking off the tax on tea and the tax on corn, I am bound to say that in my view the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Government were right in choosing a prime necesssity of life, and on the first opportunity taking off an indirect tax which more or less, must necessarily affect the consumers of that commodity. It is because it would affect a large number of the people of the country that I thought it was proper to impose it in war time, but one of the first remissions which ought to be made, and which I am glad to see has been made, is that of a tax on a prime necessity of life which affected the poorer classes.

Looking at the matter from the economic point of view, I entirely agree with the right hon. Baronet opposite that in considering whether any financial proposal is likely to be beneficial or not, we ought to consider how it affects the condition of the artisan and the working-class people of the country, and those who are earning what may be called an average wage. Many members of the community will be above any question as regards a tax of this kind, but others may be in such a poor condition that you would want some very different remedy from this to alter their conditions at all. If, however, you take the average artisan earning an average wage, you ought to be most careful that in any financial proposal you safeguard his position, and see that no undue burden is put upon either the food he eats or the raw commodities in which he is interested. From that point of view these economic questions are not to be decided as merely economic questions, but rather as a subordinate part of our social science, and that is a mistake which has been made by various hon. Members opposite. They push the mere economic question too far, and leave other considerations alone. It is perfectly possible that an increase in the price of goods might be caused under such conditions as would give more than a corresponding increase in wages, with the result that the condition of the working classes would be better. No one who has considered these economic questions can deny that conditions of that kind might arise, and I say if they do arise I shall never be overruled by mere cheapness of imports and cheapness of production, but shall go more into the true conditions of the people, and if a tax of that kind would conduce to their benefit it will have my support. Free trade, after all, in only one branch of free competition, and whatever economists you may refer to, from Adam Smith downwards, everyone admits that social science demands certain limitations with regard to free competition. I would ask, Why should free competition be unlimited in our foreign relationships when it has to be limited as regards our domestic industrial conditions? There are wider considerations to be taken into account. It would be more than a misfortune if, without due inquiry into detail, proposals came from the Government which might tend to upset the fiscal policy on which we have had such a large measure of success in the last fifty years. *Primâ facie* no one would propose to alter our fiscal free trade policy unless it were shown on careful detailed inquiry that it would operate for the better. We should have to take into consideration large questions which are not truly economic. We cannot enter upon them now. The solidarity of our Empire and the solidarity of our Colonial possessions are to my mind far more important than any mere question of cheapness based on mere economic grounds. It is far too early to make any dogmatic declaration on a policy of this kind. I am not aware of any statistics of a sufficiently minute character since those collected by the Royal Commission on trade depression in 1885. I shall rejoice, for my part, if this inquiry to be held is held by the Government itself, and not by an outside body. I quite agree that they are responsible in the matter; they are responsible for leading the House and their Party, and for leading the country. What is more important is, I think, that they ought not to go in any precipitate fashion, and they ought not to commit themselves, as a Government, without they feel that after inquiry there is a real chance in changing our fiscal policy either of putting the Empire in a better position or improving the social condition of the working classes. Until that inquiry has been made, and in sufficient detail, it is quite impossible for any private Member to make any dogmatic assertion on a question of this kind. We cannot go into the wider questions on an occasion of this sort, but I do protest against the view that no inquiry may be necessary, and against the view that there should be any precipitate disclosure by the Government until that inquiry has been fully held, because the fiscal policy of this country is far too important a matter to be dealt with on any experimental basis.

*SIR WILLIAM HOLLAND (Yorkshire, W.R., Rotherham): The hon. and learned Member who has just sat down, whilst expressing a preference for an inquiry by the Government, wisely refrained from indicating the particular Member of the Government to whom he would entrust the labours of the inquiry. If he had looked at the Government Bench, he would have found some of its occupants who held a foregone conclusion in one direction, and others who held a foregone conclusion in another direction, and that the Prime Minister was the only occupant with an absolutely open mind. I notice that many of those who are supporting this Amendment have declared themselves to be fair traders. For myself, I am a sort of fair trader in that I believe in getting a fair share of the trade of the world. I wish to express my cordial appreciation of the conduct of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in taking off this corn tax. As a result of its removal, some in the country will be better fed than before. But I desire still more to express my warm appreciation of the conduct of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the very brave stand he made yesterday in this House against the disintegrating proposals of the Colonial Secretary. I am glad to know that not only the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, but his predecessor also, are men of strong backbone and conviction with regard to the fiscal system of this country which ought to prevail; and that they have resolutely refused to put our whole system into the melting pot at the bidding of the Colonial Secretary. Although this corn tax is not in itself a very big affair, yet we are glad for it to be removed because we are thankful for small mercies, and we return the Chancellor of the Exchequer our thanks accordingly. Although the corn tax is not big in itself, it is big in its potentialities. We are glad the tax is repealed, because with its repeal a standing temptation to return to protection will be removed, and for myself I am not tired of the system of free trade which we have here. I think amongst other testimonials to the value of that system, I can quote the splendid way in which the cost of the South African war was borne by the taxpayers at home. The way the country was able to bear that burden showed that it had not altogether gone to the dogs. I dissent entirely from the theory that dearer food necessarily will bring in its train higher wages. On the contrary, I hold that wages are influenced not by the price of food, but by demand for labour. If two masters go after one man, wages will rise; but if, on the other hand, two workmen go after one situation, wages will fall. I can testify that the bare suggestion of a possibility of retaliation threw a feeling of consternation over many responsible business men in the north, and, therefore, the sooner this question is threshed out the better. I trust the Prime Minister will be able to indicate a very early day when this question can be fully discussed.

We have had the question raised as to who pays the corn tax and import duties in general. I know how it works in some of our large industries in the North. Let me take an illustration from the Manchester Exchange, where thousands of buyers and sellers congregate every market day. When a salesman goes there to sell his cotton wares he is asked his price, it may be by merchants from Germany, China, Brazil, or Australia, and he quotes the same price irrespective of the market for which his goods are required. And the fact of his quoting absolutely the same price shows that the tariff or duty must be paid by the country to which the goods go. I am in favour of free trade being maintained in this country quite irrespective of what other countries may do, because I believe that is the best policy for this country to pursue. Surely each country should be the best judge of the particular fiscal system suited to its own needs. Under free trade I hold employment is more regular, for where you have a market limited by protection you have great booms on the one hand and frequent crises on the other. It has been pointed out that protection has done something to establish the iron and steel trade in America. By a protective tariff you may stimulate the establishment of industries in any country so long as the home market can take off the production and the consumers are willing to pay the price. But in the United Kingdom production has attained such colossal proportions that we are dependent upon our export trade to provide employment for the inhabitants of this country, and therefore the importance of free trade increases in proportion as we depend on foreign markets. Those countries which have adopted protection have favoured the accumulation of fabulous fortunes in a few hands. But I put it to the House as to whether it would not be better for the stability of those States and the happiness of their people if wealth were more widely and evenly distributed. It was argued by the hon. and learned Member for the Stretford Division that although free traders seemed to favour free competition and free imports they did not favour free competition in domestic affairs, and he mentioned the case of the Factory Acts. I wish to point out that by those Acts the good health of the workers is secured, and in proportion as they do this so is their work likely to be efficient, and in proportion as it is efficient so is it likely to be economical.

Another objection to this corn tax is that it was liable to be used as a step towards preferential tariffs. Recently I read the Blue-book containing the Report of the Conference of Colonial Premiers when they were in this country, and I know that they had an eye on the corn tax when they passed the Resolution urging the expediency of the mother country giving an advantage to the colonies by exempting them from existing duties. If the corn tax had been so utilised it would have promoted grave discontent, because some colonies would have benefited and others would not, and thus jealousy would have been promoted. If the corn tax which was put on last year, and which has been taken off this year, were to be put on again in a very short time, would it not make this House of

Commons a laughing-stock, not only in the eyes of our own country, but in the eyes of the other nations of the earth? I feel quite sure that the Colonial Secretary had his eye on the corn tax when he wrote to the colonies "egging" them on to support his views. And in a very few days we had the Prime Minister of New Zealand presenting a pistol at our heads. I question the wisdom of inviting the self-governing colonies to interfere at all with the tariffs of the mother country, for if we fail to accept their suggestions ill-feeling will be likely to result. I am in favour of the colonies having an absolutely free hand to frame their tariffs in accordance with their own needs, and I am also in favour of our having an equally free hand. I know that the mother country is not in any sense behind in her anxiety to show goodwill and gratitude to the colonies for the preferences they have given and the services they have rendered, but that goodwill, in my judgment, cannot be shown by the mother country by the imposition of taxes on corn. It may be shown in another, a wiser, and a better way, namely, by a very liberal treatment of the colonies in regard to the colonial contribution towards Imperial defence. I am, therefore, against the Amendment now before the House, and I hope the Government will be supported in the repeal of the corn tax.

*SIR JOHN ROLLESTON (Leicester): From the course that the debate has taken it is clear that the path along which Chancellors of the Exchequer have to travel, who have not only to provide abnormal revenue, but to maintain a somewhat high level of expenditure, cannot be a smooth one. I am one of those referred to by the hon. Member for Exeter who believe that a high level of expenditure will have to be maintained in future. The reaction caused by abnormal expenditure gives rise very naturally to a demand for retrenchment. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer, who referred to this question yesterday, said that the policy of both parties was retrenchment. But it is the conviction that the policy, not perhaps of parties, but of the people, is even now, not for reduced, but for continually increasing expenditure, that inclines me to criticise the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer from that standpoint. Retrenchment is a very good word for the platform, like the "Big Loaf" and other things. It is a good article to put in the shop window, but in practise it is not kept in stock. There is no dealing in it. The people of this country have no use for it. I would adduce in support of my argument the position taken up by the hon. Member for Woolwich. Efficiency is what every one desires in his own household and business and estate. Efficiency in public Departments is, of course, desirable, but that there can be any serious retrenchment in our national finances I no more believe than I believe there can be in the expenditure of the London County Council. Whether Greater Britain may be called upon to contribute or not, in my view there can be no serious retrenchment in our military and naval services. The people are making greater demands on the Exchequer year by year. They are advancing to a higher standard of requirement altogether. Let us hope that it is proportionate to their rise in the plane of civilisation. Social reform is demanded and with justice, but retrenchment and reform cannot go hand in hand. With the demands made for education, Irish land pensions, housing, and other things in prospect, how can there be any possibility of retrenchment? It appears to me that Chancellors of the Exchequer will more and more in the future have to exercise their wits and their ingenuity in providing a permanently larger revenue. And why not? Retrenchment, I submit, is one of the surest signs of decay. This country is not yet in its old age, its destiny is not yet in the maturity, perhaps only on the threshold of its fulfilment, and to talk of cutting down expenses when a business is growing and prospering, is to admit that the managers have no faith in its soundness and stability. I confess that I have that faith, and believe it will be better to devote our energies to the provision of a permanently larger revenue rather than to the dispiriting task of cutting down expenditure which is not in accordance with the view of the great majority of the people of this country.

The fiscal conditions of this country are peculiar and indeed unique. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the revenue did not increase proportionately to expenditure. But surely we can find many sources of revenue in a country whose imports last year amounted to £530,000,000. With this huge foreign trade, in a country that derives so small a proportion of its revenue from external taxation, from Customs, the difficulties of internal taxation must indeed be great. Then we come to a system of preying upon our neighbour, and an instance of this is a petition which was recently presented to the Chancellor of the Exchequer by hon. Members representing labour, claiming that the proportion of the expenses of the country which labour pays should be remitted, and should be borne by the Income Tax payers instead. I freely admit that taxation is felt much more severely by the poor than by the rich. In the case of the poor man, his contribution may go to increase a domestic deficit, but in the case of the rich man it may be paid out of a handsome surplus. The equality of sacrifice is not the same. I agree most thoroughly with the contention that taxation should be paid by the rich on a higher scale than by the poor, but I cannot agree that, under normal conditions, the well-employed working class are amongst the poor. I think we ought to be thankful that that is so. But the last half century has witnessed a great improvement, an improvement which is still going on, in the lot of the working man, not only as regards wages and employment, but also in his personal comfort and the conditions under which he works, and I cannot believe that, under normal conditions, the working classes of the country are unable or unwilling to bear their share of the burden of national expenditure. That would be opposed to the principles of that socialistic philosophy, of which hon. Members representing Labour are usually, I believe, disciples. There are, however, we must with sorrow admit, many very poor classes in this country, and that something should be given back to them will be the desire of every Member of the House. There are many very poor people amongst the Income Tax payers: it is not only amongst those who work for daily wage that the burden of poverty is felt, and what indirect taxation we have is, in my opinion, fair taxation. As compared with other countries, the amount is small, and the principle on which it is imposed is socialistic and scientific. It is in view of the social reforms which are demanded that I regret the abolition of the shilling registration duty on corn. I do not wish to repeat the statements so frequently made in this debate as to those upon whom it falls. If it does fall on the working classes in any degree, it must be a very small degree indeed. It seems to me that to do away with a tax which is not oppressive, and which is felt so slightly, if at all, cannot be sound national finance. But it cannot be denied that there is in the country a strong sentimental objection to the tax. The people have been taught that their bread has been made dearer and their loaf smaller by it, and therefore they may be content to do without it, even if they have in consequence to go short of some of those many other things that are required. The Chancellor of the Exchequer very truly said that this tax was subject to misrepresentation. That may be in itself a sufficient reason for giving it up. It will be well, when the next General Election comes round, that the issues should be true, clear, and well-defined, and if the abolition of this tax has abstracted one false issue, one fraudulent cry from the stage properties of the electioneerer, it may have done the country more good than its retention would have done. But I must confess that the privilege of being able to quarter my political escutcheon with a big loaf does not seem to me sufficient compensation for that set-back to social reform which, by exaggerating and emphasising the difficulties of obtaining revenue, the abolition of this tax will, in my opinion, directly and indirectly involve.

I have only one other point to urge. In my view, if these social reforms are to be carried out, we shall have to look to an extension of our system of indirect taxation. I do not see why hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite should object to this, for I have a recollection of India having been introduced several times in the debate, and I can remember that the last time hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite sat on this side of the House, ten years ago, India was in need of money, and had a yearly deficit. What did they do? They put on duties all along the line, and with great success, for India has had a handsome surplus ever since I make no complaint of this, but I do complain that they removed the protective effect of these duties, which they had imposed, from the goods of Lancashire, while leaving them in full force on those of Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. The difference in principle between the imposition of duties in Great Britain and in India, when money is wanted, has still to be explained to the people of this country. I have looked for an expression of opinion on these duties from the Cobden Club, which suggests that the shilling corn duty is protective, but I have looked in vain, until I am forced to the conviction that the principles of the Cobden Club, like other economic fallacies, can only flourish on false suggestion and truth suppressed. I have in my constituency a preponderance of working-men, most of them members of trades unions, well organised, taking a keen interest in the affairs of the day. Some of their leaders are travelled men, who have seen the condition of trade in other parts of the world, and whose opinions are therefore entitled to respect. Now the floor of this House is the only opportunity we have of discussing these matters face to face, and what I would respectfully ask the leaders of labour is (and I ask it in no carping or critical spirit, but in the hope that they might help in the solution of these most difficult problems)—what I would ask is, if pensions and other social reforms are to be carried out, how they would suggest that, say, £20,000,000 a year additional revenue is to be obtained, if the members of trades unions are not to contribute; and even if they do contribute, how then would they raise it? And I would respectfully suggest that in the consideration of these matters we should only advance proposals which are practicable and possible, and put forward not so much our individual opinions of what ought to be, but rather what in this imperfect world may be and can be. I agree thoroughly with the principle that taxation should be obtained, where it can be done without oppression, in substantial amounts from a few people, such as the Death Duties, but it must also be levied by duties, small and inappreciable in amount perhaps, on articles in general use throughout the country. It is the combination of these two which seems to me the scientific system. But I cannot conceive any system possible under which three-fourths of the community are to escape any contribution whatever. That would be opposed to the Socialistic ideal, and to the principles on which a true Commonwealth should be founded. I do not believe that the great numbers of those who work for daily wage are less loyal to the State than any other class. Recent events have proved this; and I can only hope that they are able, and that with that fuller employment which peace and commercial revival should bring. they will be the more able, as we know they are willing, to share in some degree with other classes in the expenses of the upkeep of the nation, even if in the future those expenses may have to be increased. The settlement of these matters cannot be arrived at by parties nor by sections, but, as the Prime Minister said, by the heart, and the conscience, and the intelligence of the people as a whole, and I think that in their discussion mementary political considerations should not and ought not, to find a place. In the long and brilliant career of this country, with all the sweeping changes of its past, but still unbroken record of advance, the fate of a Government, of any Government, can be but a matter of minor and subsidiary importance while the nation as a whole is imbued with the sentiment, the patriotic sentiment, that the continuity of our history, the advancement of our people, and the progress of our race, can only be furthered and promoted in the future, as in the past, in a degree perhaps by the brain power of some and the bravery of others. but mainly and chiefly, and perhaps wholly, by the patient help of all.

MR. BUCHANAN (Perthshire, E.): I cannot help thinking that, remarkable as the debate yesterday was, the course it has pursued this afternoon is almost as remarkable. I am quite conscious that the House of Commons this afternoon has no desire to hear me, nor have I any desire to address it. I do not think the House wishes to hear any further expression of opinion from these benches, nor from the opposite benches. What we desire to hear, and what we have desired during the whole course of the afternoon to hear, is an expression of opinion from the Treasury bench. I believe it is wholly without precedent that a debate of this importance should have extended over two days, and that during the whole of an afternoon not a single right hon. Gentleman has risen from the Treasury bench to take part in it. It is now nearly four hours since the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Fife made a most vigorous and trenchant speech, in which he urgently appealed to the Prime Minister or some other occupant of the Treasury bench to give the House leading on the subject, and especially leading on the most important point of all, namely, what is the real settled opinion of the Government as a Government on this most important question? But the Prime Minister and other right hon. Gentlemen on that bench have sat dumb. The Prime Minister has now left the House; but there are other Members of the Government present from whom we should like to get an expression of opinion. The Secretary of State for India is present. India is a most important part of the British Empire. India is a free trade community; and the views of the Secretary of State for India on this subject are certainly second in importance to the views of no other Member of the Government except the Prime Minister. Yet there is no sign that the Secretary of State for India has any intention of vouchsafing to us his opinion on this subject. If my memory does not fail me, the noble Lord used to be a free trader, and a pretty decided free trader; and we shall be glad to hear, and all interested in the prosperity of India will be glad to hear, that the noble Lord still remains attached to his former convictions. But his silence, and the silence of the whole Government, only shows still more fully the awkward position in which, not only this House, but the country is placed by the diverse utterance of Members of the Government on the fundamental principles which have guided our fiscal policy in the past, and must guide it in the future. I will give way to the Secretary of State for India, if he now chooses to address the House. I would urge upon him that it would be of great importance that we should get an expression of opinion from him before the debate ends.

There is the question of the inquiry; and, if I remember aright, the statement about the inquiry was part of the written document read by the Chancellor of the Exchequer yesterday; and we may presume, therefore, that it was the settled opinion, not merely of the right hon. Gentleman but of the Government. We may go a step further and assume that the written document was agreed upon, if not formally at any rate informally, by himself and his colleagues. [AN HON. MEMBER: The right hon. Gentleman denied that.] The right hon. Gentleman did not deny that; but he said he spoke for himself in some respects, and for his colleagues in other respects; and he declined to tell the House in what part of his speech he spoke for his colleagues. I think we may assume that this proposal of an inquiry was adopted by the Government as a kind of makeshift, as a means of getting over the difficult and awkward dilemma in which they are. In that case we ought to have, during this debate, some further particulars as to the means and methods by which this inquiry is to be undertaken, if it is to be undertaken at all. I do not believe in the reality of this proposal. I believe that after the Finance Bill is got through we shall hear no more about it. It is put forward to serve a temporary purpose; and when that purpose has been served it will be dropped.

As the noble Lord shows no sign of taking part in the debate, I may be allowed to say a few words on one or two of the issues which have been raised. I do not think the debate has been wholly useless. I think we have had some good results from it. We have had at least a downright straightforward speech from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and another from the Secretary to the Treasury. These Members of the Government spoke most categorically, clearly, and vigorously, in favour of free trade; and we all welcome the uncompromising way in which they expressed their adhesion to that guiding principle of our commercial policy. We had a most interesting speech this afternoon from the hon. Gentleman the Member for Exeter, in which he also spoke out with great clearness in the same direction. I think I am within the mark in saying that on the other side of the House the preponderating opinion is in favour of free trade; and if there are hon. Gentlemen opposite who favour protection, and, still more, favour the proposals of the Colonial Secretary, they have been very backward in giving expression to their opinions. I believe the expression of opinion we have heard on that side of the House in the course of these debates is the fundamental opinion of the country. In the most powerful speech of the right hon. Member for West Bristol yesterday, there was one part to which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer made no reply. The right hon. Member for West Bristol dwelt on the rapid increase of the normal expenditure of this country, and the absence on the part of the Government of any great effort to restrain it. As an illustration he pointed out that we still had, in spite of the repeal of the corn duty, the extra duties on beer and spirits, and an income tax of 11d. in the £. It is a great matter for regret that the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not deal with this, and it is also to be regretted that in no speech, neither his Budget speech nor since, has he taken any strong line showing that the Government has some fixed idea of adopting strong measures of retrenchment. I think they should endeavour to stop the rapid growth constantly going on in our normal expenditure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had a great opportunity this year at the end of an expensive war, on which we had been spending money lavishly, and for which we had been taxing freely. He would have had the country with him if he had said we must make a strong effort to get rid of the increased war debt as soon as possible, and do something to check the constant rapid growth of our normal expenditure. It is not too late, even now. If he were to take that stand now he would have the opinion of the country behind him. I was astonished to hear the hon. Baronet who has just sat down express an opinion in the contrary direction, and I do not think he is a true interpreter of public opinion. It has been said that economy has a future and no present. I believe the future of economy is dawning now, and it will be one of the most important issues placed before the country at the next general election.

I do not think it is to the credit of the Government, and still less to the credit of the Prime Minister, that in the whole course of the debate to-day no attempt has been made to reply to the speeches on this side of the House and of the Government's own supporters. It is not fair to those Gentlemen, to the House of Commons, or to the country. It is impossible for the principles which guide the fiscal policy of this country to be left suspended in the air. The House of Commons and the country must insist on getting a clear and categorical decision from the Prime Minister as to what the real opinion of the Government is, otherwise I am certain he will soon cease to be Prime Minister and his colleagues will cease to have the direction of the affairs of the country.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping): I wish to explain why I am unable on this occasion to follow the Government. I confess there is a certain amount of personal feeling in the matter. Last year I voted for the registration duty on corn, because it was proved to my satisfaction that it was not a protective duty, and that it would produce the maximum amount of revenue with the minimum of disadvantage to the working classes. Armed with the arguments adduced by the leaders of my Party, I went to my constituents and explained that I was convinced that those arguments were sound. They were good enough to accept my explanation, and now I have been made a fool of—not by hon. Gentlemen opposite, but by my own Government. The arguments which last year they adduced in favour of the tax remain the same to-day, and, having voted last year for the imposition of this duty, it would be impossible for me now suddenly to turn round and vote for its remission. One of the reasons given for its remission is that it is open to misrepresentation. A tax is naturally misrepresented by hon. Gentlemen opposite. They are perfectly within their rights in endeavouring to persuade the country that any taxes we impose are injurious, while any they might impose would be beneficial. Therefore I cannot apply that salve to my conscience. I regret to differ from a Government which up to the present I have always believed to be in the right, but although I heard the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer I have heard no reasons given in favour of the repeal of the tax which outweigh those which were given last year for its imposition; therefore, I have no option but to vote in favour of the Amendment.

*MR. MANSFIELD (Lincolnshire, Spalding): Having the honour to represent an agricultural constituency mostly contiguous to that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford, I have endeavoured, during the whole of this debate, to discover some reason why I should support the Amendment. The reasons given in its favour have been very few. One was, that it produced £2,500,000 per annum. But as the Gentlemen who put forward that reason are not conspicuous by their desire for economy in the spending of money, I look with the greatest suspicion at their contention, because it would provide more money to be extravagantly expended. The real reason seems to be that the tax is capable of enlargement, and tends to open the door to other taxes of a similar description, which would result in burdening the food of the people. The only classes that seem to be anxious for the maintenance of the tax are the farming and milling classes. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford, speaking as an agriculturist, has moved this Amendment against its repeal. But in agriculture, as in all other industries, there are various interests involved, and we are too apt in this House to forget that there is such a being as the agricultural labourer. He was forgotten when the Workmen's Compensation Act was passed, and was remembered only on the eve of an election. We are too apt to think that agriculture is exclusively represented by the landlord and the large farmer class. In my constituency, the small holder and the agricultural labourer form by far the greater proportion of the people; and I desire to speak on their behalf, and it is in their interest I shall vote against the Amendment. The effect of a tax on the majority, rather than its effect on the minority, should be considered, and the policy that dictates a tax should be measured by its operation on the many rather than on the few. What is the policy, and what is likely to be the consequence of maintaining this tax? I affirm that if the tax is left on and the door kept open for its enlargement, the men who will be the hardest hit are the agricultural labourers, who are the poorest paid, the hardest worked, and, I might almost say, the most deserving class in the country. Certainly they are the least organised, and when one considers that any increase in the price of food represents such a large proportion of their small earnings, it must be conceded that their case is a very hard one and ought to be considered. If this Amendment is carried food will be dearer. There is no doubt about that now. We have got into the daylight with regard to that fact. Last year when we on this side declared that the imposition of the tax would mean dearer food, we were assured on the authority of the Government that that was not the case, and that the foreigner would pay, while now we are told that the foreign railway companies have paid. Our experience of railway companies in this country and of the railway trusts in the United States convinces us that the railway companies are very well able to take care of themselves, and that they do not go round on philanthropic missions, trying to find out how they can pay the taxes put on the food of the people. What we had previously stated is now conceded.

The hon. Member for Tonbridge told us that according to statistics the loaf has not risen in price, and he gave as an instance that in March of last year the loaf in London was 5d., and at the end of the year it was the same. If the hon. Member will look at the statistics he will find that he referred to household bread which is a rather better class than that eaten by the very poor. The second class quality of bread fetched in the early part of the year from 3½d. to 4d., and then it went up to 4½d. and 5d. So there was a very decided advance in the price of bread which the poor man had to buy. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer practically conceded the differences in the price of corn early in the history of the tax, because when the cab and omnibus drivers complained to him of their difficulties, because of the price of corn he advised them to raise their fares. It is now conceded by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer that the poor had to pay this tax on food, and as a matter of fact the people who now say that the poor do not pay are practically confined to the few who have brought forward this Amendment. The right hon. Gentlemen the Member for Sleaford and the hon. Member for Sheffield make a very charming duet if it were not that in this matter, at any rate, they are like "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," but they will not be heard. The hon. Member for South Derbyshire stated in the constituency in which I live that he would pay £1,000 to anyone who could prove that the poor had to pay the tax. I commend that to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. There is a fine chance for the Revenue. In the interests of the country, and in the interests of the Revenue, why cannot the Chancellor of the Exchequer claim that £1,000. There is a fine way open to some hon. Member to defray the expenses of an election, which cannot be postponed very long, and which may come upon us at any moment.

In 1794 corn was 94s. per quarter, and wages were so low that the magistrates had to fix a minimum wage that should be paid to the workers of the country, and then make up from the rates enough to feed and keep them in decency. The effect of that was that whole parishes were pauperised, with corn at 94s. per quarter. The Colonial Secretary said that if they raised the price of food wages would go up in proportion, or rather more than in proportion, because there would be something left over. What are the facts with regard to that? The Government Returns show that that was not true; and these Returns are not compiled by the War Office, so they can be taken as correct. They were taken for the years 1840 (before the repeal of the corn tax) and 1894. What was the condition of things when food was high? Because what has been may be again, and although it is not safe for me to prophesy what may happen in the future, the facts may be used as the basis for forming an idea as to what will happen if food is raised. In London in 1840 the average carpenter (according to the Government Returns) got 27s. per week; in 1894 he got 35s.; in 1840 the bricklayer got 27s., and in 1894, 38s.; in 1840 the ordinary town labourer got 18s.; in 1894, 25s.; in 1840, the provincial town labourer got 14s.; in 1894, 25s.; in 1840, the cotton weavers averaged 12s. per week; now they averaged 15s. 2d.; in 1840 in the iron trade the fitter got 21s., and he now gets 32s.; in 1840, his labourer got 15s., and now he gets 21s. The agricultural labourer before the repeal got 10s. 6d. per week, and he now gets 16s. on the average. A careful study of these figures will show that the agricultural labourer is the most hardly hit class of any in the community. In 1840 he earned 10s. 6d. per week, which enabled him to purchase five pecks of wheat. In 1885 he got 16s., and that enabled him to purchase sixteen pecks of wheat. These figures show what an alarming state of things may be in front of the agricultural labourer and the poorer class of the community if this tax is continued or made the machinery through which a larger tax may be put upon the community. Dear food is not accompanied by higher wages; it is calculated to bring about a lower standard of living and vitality, and a largely increased lunacy and mortality. It is altogether against the interests of the workers that the food stuffs of this country should be high in price.

And, it being half-past Seven of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till this Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

FINANCE BILL.

[Second Reading.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question [9th June], "That the Bill be now read a second time"—

Which Amendment was—

"To leave out the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'this House considers that the financial policy of His Majesty's Government, in the remission of indirect taxation imposed only last year for purposes of a permanent character involves a needless and injurious disturbance of trade and a serious loss to the Revenue, without substantial relief to the consumer; and that, if any remission of indirect taxation is considered necessary by His Majesty's Government, such remission ought to be made by a reduction of the Duties proposed to be levied on tea or other articles of general consumption." (*Mr. Chaplin.*)

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."—

Debate resumed.

*Mr. MANSFIELD: When the sitting was interrupted I was endeavouring to show that while from the point of view of the large farmers possibly the retention of this tax might be looked upon with some favour, from the point of view of the small holders and the agricultural labourers it is looked upon with alarm. And I was giving my reasons why I could not give my support to the Amendment of the right hon. Member for Sleaford. The argument that the high price of food creates a high wage is not an argument based on our experience of the past, but on pure fancy, and an argument which it is not desirable to adopt. In the interest of the small farmers, small shopkeepers and labourers, and all those who are not owners of large landed property, I was protesting against the retention of this tax. In connection with the taxation of food, the Colonial Secretary has admitted one thing, stated another, and promised two others. He has admitted that the working classes pay three-fourths of the taxation of food, because it has been shown that of the indirect taxation of this country the working classes pay three-fourths, and he has made a promise that wages would increase, and a kind of semi-promise that if the workers are not starved by the time they are sixty-five they shall have 5s. a week. With regard to these statements, the figures I have quoted show the statements cannot be founded on the facts of the past, because although it may be true that there may be some increase of wages in some directions, it is not true generally. It may be that some of the branches of the iron workers may get an increase of wages, and the makers of ammunition may get an increase of wages, and that a great deal of the rubbish made in Birmingham may sell at a higher price, and that the workers may benefit, but what about the miners, the operatives in the building trades, the small investors and the like? Is the Chancellor of the Exchequer going to pay bigger interest on Consols? Are the investors in the savings bank to get more for their money? What about the postmen, the civil servants, the policemen, the arsenal men, and the soldiers and the sailors? Is their pay going to be correspondingly increased? Practically everybody but the Colonial Secretary is convinced that his optimistic view will not be held long after the food stuffs of the country are taxed in the way that is suggested. If there is an increase in the wages at all, it must come not by the free will of the masters, but after a long series of strikes and disputes, in the course of which the workmen will be reduced to the point of starvation, as is the case at Penrhyn, before they secure their rights. Is the Colonial Secretary going to help them in their battles, and, after all these strikes, will he speak from their platforms and do what he can to get their wages raised? Then there is promised also a sort of ready reckoner for the working people of the country from which they will be able to make out what they ought to have. I have never found that they ever had any difficulty about that; they know already; their difficulty is to get it. When can we see a copy of this table? Is it to be placed in the library, or must we go to the Unionist agent to give us the particulars of the scheme, and is the table promised going to be of any interest to the working man when he cannot get what it says he ought to have? The working men of this country will not have it.

The headquarters of the Party opposite are in a state of chaos and confusion at the present moment, because they are told that this scheme of increased taxation on the food of the people will not be tolerated in the constituencies. The Colonial Secretary is wrecking his Party in the same way, as we have reason to know, as he wrecked our Party in the eighties. The old lesson has been starved into the people of this country, and they will not have protection. It is all very well to say this tax is to be withdrawn because it is subject to misrepresentation, but that is not the case. It is being withdrawn because it is thoroughly understood; because the people know what it means, and because many of them who have passed through the old black starvation days of protection have no wish to go back to them. The Colonial Secretary speaks with two voices, and the people agree with what he said in 1885. We know that the Colonial Secretary has taken for his motto "What I have said I have said." The voice in 1885 said taxation of food would reduce wages, but the other voice says it will increase them. It may be a fair election cry. The taxation of food will raise the wages of the people, but right hon. Gentlemen opposite know in their hearts that the people will not have the Birmingham scheme though it may be called by a German name. The Colonial Secretary admits that the poor pay three-fourths of the indirect taxation. That being so, where was he when the Budget of last year was being conceived? Why did he sit still then and hear it said that this tax would not fall on the poor, and why, when the argument was used that it would broaden the basis of taxation, did he not say that three-fourths of the indirect taxation was paid by the poor? It was admitted last night that one-third of the population of this country was below the border line of what was necessary to keep them alive, and it was suggested by some speakers that that fact in itself was sufficient to warrant the country in reversing its present fiscal policy which has been so successful. I do not view it in that light. I agree with the right hon. Member for the Cambridge University when he said that to reverse the fiscal policy was not the way to remedy that state of things, that the effect of altering our fiscal arrangements would be to bring some of those who are just above, below that line; to press those now beneath it still lower down, and to bring distress to every class. Why is one-third of the population below the line? That is the question we want to answer, and we want to conceive a plan by which taxation shall be made less hard on the one-third below the border line in its unfair and restrictive incidence.

We on this side of the House are fully justified in the action we took last year, and we welcome the Budget so far as it goes. The future, the Government tell us, is to be met by a point of interrogation. There is to be an inquiry. How long have the Party opposite been fond of inquiries with a view to legislation? Was there an inquiry on the part of the Government before the South African war? I venture to think if there had been there would have been no war Was there an inquiry with regard to the Education Act? We are told there was one in convocation, but did the Government hold an inquiry, and did they take the views of the Nonconformists of the country? The reason they are converted to the idea of an inquiry now is because it is a convenient way of shelving this question for a time. I hope the Colonial Secretary will give us the light and leading which has been sought on both sides of the House, and that he will tell us, as was suggested by the right hon. Member for East Fife, whether he has converted the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer has converted him. I think that would be very helpful to us in coming to a decision on this matter. I think the Prime Minister ought to come down off the fence. We have been twitted with the fact that there was a united Party opposite, and that we sat on the fence. The Party opposite are in that position now. We know where we are now—we are on the right side of the fence, and we ask that the Prime Minister, who is the leader of the Government after all, and is responsible for the Cabinet so far as he can be, should tell us to-night what Minister he favours;

which view he takes; what is to be the policy of the Government; and whether he is in favour of taxing the food of the people, or in favour of keeping up the old traditions of free trade, which has done so much to make us the people we are? One of the most heroic characters in our history was old Sir Richard Grenville, who refused to flee from overwhelming foes and forsake his sick and wounded. When the enemy surrounded him, he was prepared to sink his ship rather than fall into their hands. If the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister tells us it is his intention to sink his ship rather than give up the principles of free trade, he also will go down in history as a hero, and the poor, the destitute, and the starving will bless him for what he did to help them in their hard struggle for life. Mr. Speaker, I have simply risen to say that although I am the representative of an agricultural constituency, I cannot go into the lobby with the mover of this Amendment.

*MR. DUKE (Plymouth): The hon. Member who has just sat down has recommended the Prime Minister to model himself on Sir Richard Grenville. The view a man like Sir Richard Grenville would take might often help us, it we knew it, and in so far as this corn duty before the House is bound up with the much greater question which we all desire to discuss at an early opportunity, it is a question which appeals to those large considerations which governed the Empire-builders of past times. So far as the question on which we have to come to an immediate decision is concerned, those considerations do not arise. I assume that in the division which will take place there will be an overwhelming majority in favour of the repeal of the duty. On the other side, the Amendment will be voted against with great heartiness, because it is supposed to contain the germ of dangerous legislation. If I thought this vote would be taken as the decision of the House upon the greater question which has been suggested, I could not give my vote in favour of the Government. It seems to me there is a great gulf between the decision which the House is to give to-night as to whether the corn duty shall be discontinued as a registration duty, and the question whether the corn duty shall be retained in order that in some future session of some future Parliament it may be made the foundation of a new course of legislation. At the present moment it appears to me that the conclusion impressed upon the minds of most of us is that this duty has no protective tendency at all, and the real controversy is whether it should or should not be continued as a foundation for future protective legislation. I do not think we are entitled to take advantage of the exigencies of a great war and the patriotism of the masses of the people which permitted this tax; on the first necessary of life, to start on a new financial policy for which there is no mandate from the electors; and taking that view, I am not at all ready to vote for the Amendment of the right hon. Member for Sleaford. On the other hand, I cannot ignore the facts on which the right hon. Member founded his Motion. It seems to be assumed on the other side of the House that the condition of things which exists in 1903 is the condition of things which existed in 1852. I take the view that none of the facts material to the case at the present time were in existence in 1852. The United States as a source of food supply for this country did not exist to any substantial extent at the time of the decision of 1852. The German Empire, as an entity in politics or as an industrial force, did not then exist. The British Empire, as we understand it to-day, did not exist at that time. It is true we had scattered over the world a number of colonies which were regarded with great alarm and apprehension among politicians whose successors sit on that side of the House. [OPPOSITION cries of "No, no."] Well, let hon. Gentlemen opposite consider the speeches made immediately before 1852, and they will see at once whether the politicians of those days regarded the unity of the colonies with the mother country as a thing worth striking for or making sacrifices for. [Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: What of Mr. Disraeli?] The right hon. Gentleman refers to Mr. Disraeli, and if Mr. Disraeli had pronounced an opinion upon facts such as we have before us to-day, it would be very relevant to this discussion; but what I am venturing to point out to the right hon. Gentleman, and to those sitting behind him, is that none of these salient facts with which we are confronted to-day existed at the time of the decision of 1852. For my own part, I cannot go to my constituents and my fellow-countrymen who are confronted with gigantic difficulties which threaten the existence of their industries and attempt to fill their mouths and to silence them with something which somebody said in 1852, when the facts were so entirely different. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford is entitled in the present state of the facts to ask this House and the country whether, upon the facts as they now stand, the judgment of 1852 would be the right judgment. If I had to decide now, without further information and without inquiry, whether there should be free trade in corn and all other commodities at this moment I do not hesitate to say that I should cast my vote in the affirmative that there should be free trade. I cannot, however, disregard these matters, and I do not think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford can be expected to disregard them.

Let me remind the House of two or three facts which emphasise the observations I have just made. In 1871 the population of this country was about 32,000,000, and it has now increased by about one-third of that number. At that time the import of wheat into this country was 31,000,000 cwts., but it is now 81,000,000 cwts. The import of meal and flour into this country in 1871 was 5,000,000 cwts., but it is now 20,000,000 cwts. So that it will be seen that the import of agricultural produce into this country has been increased in respect of corn by about three times the amount, and in the case of wheat, meal, and flour by about four times the amount, whilst the population has increased by something like one-third. During that period a new trade in fresh meat, bacon, and hams has grown up. The importation of bacon has increased from 500,000 cwts. to 5,000,000 cwts. During the same period the import of beef has increased from 1,200,000 cwts. to 3,500,000 cwts. The import of fresh mutton did not exist then to any large extent, and now it has grown to a total of 3,500,000 cwts. In face of facts like these it is expected that the agricultural community of this country, who have a right to look forward at any rate to supply something towards the daily necessaries of life for the mass of their fellow countrymen, should be content with the present state of things, which practically excludes them from their own market, and which, in the course of about thirty years, has had the result of producing a trebled increase in the importation of wheat, a quadrupled increase in the importation of flour, and has brought into existence this immense importation of meat of all kinds. The agricultural classes of this country naturally say that if there is some doctrine—certainly not of divine origin, but absolutely of human origin—rejected in every other country in the world but accepted in this country, and operating with such results to them, they should be allowed to examine that doctrine. While the population of this country is increasing at a great rate, and while wealth is increasing, they wish to know whether it is in fact essential for the well being of the country that the agricultural interest should be sacrificed. There cannot be any doubt that it has been sacrificed. No one can doubt the accuracy of the figures which have been given us by the Board of Trade in regard to the importation of food.

There is another set of statistics which ought to be considered, namely, the population of this country which is directly engaged in agriculture. In 1871, when our population was so much smaller, when these imports hardly existed, that population was one-third greater than it is at the present time. So that while the population of this country as a whole has increased, and while the prosperity of the country has increased, and the consumption of all kinds of agricultural produce has also increased, the population which used to get a livelihood out of agriculture has decreased by one-third, and the condition of the agricultural population is considerably worse at the present time than it was thirty years ago. Are we to be told that because our forefathers half a century ago decided that free trade was their only possible policy, we are to offer an absolute *non-possumus* to the agriculturists who, after all, are our fellow-countrymen, who represent one of the greatest, and certainly the oldest of the industries in this country, and who ask to have their case considered. Are we to offer them nothing except the catch words of free trade which sprang up in a controversy half a century ago, under conditions absolutely different from the conditions existing at the present time. If I were driven to vote now upon the question whether we should have free trade, I should be bound in the present state of my knowledge to say "Yes," because we have had, perhaps, sixty years of prosperity. But it is impossible to ignore the decaying villages and the farms which have gone out of cultivation; it is impossible to ignore the state of the iron and coal trade, and the fact that we are exporting the coal which is the foundation of all our industries. It is impossible to look at these facts and say that we live in a state of things which makes the judgment of fifty years ago a relevant judgment at the present time, and although I am in accord with what has been said against retaining this tax as a badge of protection, I decline to be a silent Member of what was described from this bench last night as an overwhelming majority which was to be got together in favour of a perpetual system of what is now called free trade. It is not free trade, it is free imports, which is a totally different thing, and a thing which the founders of the free trade doctrine never dreamed of, and which, if they had dreamed of they would never have sanctioned.

I ask hon. Members to bear in mind that those great men who devised the great plan of that time predicted that within a short time of that period free trade would be the commercial policy of the world. But it has not become the policy of the world; it is the commercial policy of one kingdom in the universe, and we have to face the difficulties here of the competition of competitors who do not hesitate to use every kind of artificial means to build up the prosperity of their own countries. Under these circumstances, and seeing in the condition of agriculture a state of things which is likely to be repeated in the condition of the iron trade and the woollen trade as far as future prospects are concerned, and also in the condition of the cotton trade, and knowing that these staples of our commercial life represent more than two-thirds of the exports of this country, upon which the masses of our people depend for their daily bread, it is no satisfaction to me to be told that there is great wealth in this country and that it has come to the country entirely by free trade. To whom has the great wealth come? It has not come to the masses who are so crowded in our great towns. The task which lies before this House is to provide some means even of housing those masses so that there may be a reasonable expectation that they will grow up as good Englishmen and Englishwomen as their predecessors. It is no argument to say that there are great classes in this country who have accumulated wealth. We are told that we pay for part of our imports out of the interest on our investments abroad and out of the earnings of our shipping. I may point out that the agricultural labourer in the rural districts of this country and the labourers in the great towns have no share in that wealth. It may be satisfactory to them to hear that their neighbours are exceedingly prosperous, and that it does not matter to the great body of hon. Gentlemen sitting opposite, and to some Members sitting on this side of the House, whether the industry of this country is maintained at its present level or not. But the state of things to-day cannot be satisfactory to the labouring classes in the great towns or to the working farmer or the agricultural labourer. For my own part, Mr. Speaker, I am very glad that this division is taken at a time when we know something as to the future from the pledges of the Prime Minister who, after all, is the leader of this House, and who speaks the views of the Government upon matters upon which they are agreed. It is a satisfaction to me that I have to vote upon this question in the face of a promise of the right hon. Gentlemen that no step which shall be taken now, shall be held to exclude the Members of the present Government from taking any means that may be found possible to remedy the present condition of things.

As matters stand English land is going out of cultivation, English agriculture is a shrinking industry, although the consumption of agricultural products is daily and steadily increasing in this country; and the industries of this country other than agriculture are threatened with competition abroad, which is likely to be, in the case of some of them, as overwhelming a competition as it has been already in others. It is a further satisfaction to remember that the Secretary of State for the Colonies has pledged himself to apply his abilities to see if he can find some means of remedying the decaying condition of agriculture, and the threatened condition of our other industries. This seems to me to be a task worthy of statesmanship. It may not seem so to those who rejoice in the wealth accumulated in this country. To them it may not be a matter of great concern whether this country as the home of a population of 40,000,000 or 50,000,000 people shall continue or not. To me it seems to be one of the very first questions in the politics of the present day. I know hon. Gentlemen opposite take different views, and I hope they will tell their constituents their views upon this question. [OPPOSITION cries of "We will."] I find no difficulty in telling my constituents that I think their first duty is to do everything that is necessary to maintain the prosperity of this kingdom and the greatness and unity of the Empire. I believe that the guarded and cautious policy forecasted by the Colonial Secretary is a policy which at any rate shows some concern for those interests which are so much threatened at the present time. Therefore I shall give my vote in support of the Budget of the Government and the Second Reading of the Finance Bill, and reserve the liberty, from which hon. Gentlemen opposite have been careful to cut themselves away, not to reject because they are contrary to doctrines of Adam Smith or of Mr. Cobden, devised under different circumstances, proposals which in my judgment will promote the prosperity of the kingdom and the unity of the Empire.

*MR. M'KENNA (Monmouthshire, N.): The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down first gave us an argument against the repeal of the corn tax, and then he told us that he intended to vote for the repeal. I suppose we must leave the matter there. There is only one observation of his to which I should like to refer. He stated the policy of this country was one of free imports. Yes, it is; and there is no greater triumph of our free trade policy than that our imports this year should have exceeded £500,000,000 in value. The hon. and learned Gentleman imagines that these £500,000,000 are not paid for by British labour. I can assure him that there is no other way by which this £500,000,000 value of imports can be paid for except by British labour. In part it is British labour of which no mention is made in the Board of Trade Returns, but it is British labour nevertheless. I will give the hon. Member one illustration, which I will draw from the speech of the hon. Member for Hampshire. The hon. Member for Hampshire told us in his condemnation of a general free trade policy that the United States had exported to this country this year no less than £108,000,000 worth of goods; but the hon. Member did not tell us that those goods were almost entirely carried in British ships. He might also have told us what the freights on those goods amounted to, say, something like one-sixth of their value. Therefore the United States did not get £108,000,000, but perhaps £90,000,000, and about £18,000,000 of the sum total which appears under imports from the United States really represents British labour. The same thing is true of our exports. Our exports represent the value of the goods as they leave our coast, but you have to add to that the value of the British labour in the shipping. The hon. Member has spoken of the United States and their gigantic trade. Not only do we carry the exports from the United States to Great Britain, but we carry a considerable part of the general United States trade, and they have to pay a tribute to British labour both on their exports and imports. Let it not be forgotten that the profits we make upon our shipping and mercantile trade are the largest profits in business and the profits most easily made. Under free trade it is perfectly true that we have to a great extent changed the character of our industry. We were at one time an agricultural nation, but we are an agricultural nation no longer. We were at one time a great manufacturing nation, and we are still. But even that is giving place to trading and shipping. We are the merchants and the carriers of the world. The great highway of the world is ours, and scarcely a ship load of goods is carried on the ocean highway but what a Briton exacts his toll; and it is by this means that we pay for this gigantic figure of £500,000.000 of imports. That is why, when we come to examine our import and export figures, we shall have to put down another £200,000,000 for what is called invisible exports. We can show a total foreign trade, including our shipping and mercantile services, exceeding £1,000,000,000 a year.

We have been promised an inquiry, and the Government are going to get out of their difficulties by giving us an inquiry into the whole subject of free trade and protection, as if we had never discussed or considered that subject before. Would any man who ventures to come into public life in this House dare to go down to his constituents and tell them that he had not formed an opinion upon the fiscal policy of this country. The only inquiry that is relevant now is an inquiry into the state of mind of the Prime Minister. Has he made up his mind as to his policy? How can we submit this subject to a Commission? Is the Colonial Secretary going to inquire? He is not inquiring, he is fighting, and we are to have our hands tied for two years while the inquiry goes on. The Colonial Secretary is to carry fire and sword into every constituency. He has not waited for inquiry. He comes down to the House with "my policy." He promised us an inquiry, but to do what? Not an inquiry into "my policy," but into the plan by which "my policy" is to be carried out. The intricate details as to the articles on which the colonies may legitimately have a preferential tariff are to be the subjects of the Colonial Secretary's inquiry. But the Colonial Secretary, say what we will of him, is a man who knows his own mind, and needs no inquiry into the subject. What authority could any Commission have against the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary? Is any worthy gentleman who sits on this Commission, and who will examine all the figures which are as much open to the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary as they would be to the Royal Commission itself, and who forms a judgment on these figures, to come forward with the authority of the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary? What is to happen to us? The Commission gives its decision. Suppose it gives a decision against the Colonial Secretary, will that muzzle him? The question before the House now is—on what principle are we repealing this tax? Is it on the principle of free trade, or is the principle on which we are to act to be, as *The Times* newspaper expressed it, *reculer pour mieux sauter*? That is the question before us now. We are entitled to challenge the Prime Minister to declare to the country his opinion on the controversy between protection and free trade. Suppose the Commission delivers its judgment against the Colonial Secretary, he has prejudged the question. He has appealed to the colonies. He has told us in this House—I wish to quote his own words—that—

> "Nothing could be worse than to leave the colonies in doubt."

Mr. Seddon has taken advantage of the statement and he is pressing us for a conclusion on the subject. Are we to wait for two years while the Prime Minister who has not burned his boats, sits in his conning tower and views the fighting of his lieutenant. Is he then going to make up his mind after two years which side is going to win? The issue has to be fought out now. We did not raise the question. It was the Colonial Secretary who threw his sword into the scales, and the battle has now got to be fought. I have read and re-read the speech of the Prime Minister, and I can say frankly that I have studied it from the point of view of getting quotations by which I could pin the Prime Minister or the Government to some policy, but read and re-read that speech as you will you will not get any definite expression of opinion in it. I admit that the Prime Minister at this moment is absolutely at liberty, so far as regards anything he has said, to declare himself a pronounced protectionist or a pronounced free trader. Not so with the Colonial Secretary. He has expressed his opinion, and he is going to the country on a protectionist policy. Is the Prime Minister going to stand by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and free trade? Can anything be more tattered and moth-eaten than the protectionist banner raised by the Colonial Secretary and inscribed with a promise of increased wages for the working classes? The Colonial Secretary has outlined his plan in detail. He is going to raise money by import duties and fight foreigners with preferential tariffs for the purpose of increasing the wages of the working classes and giving them old-age pensions. That is a declared policy which we can understand, and on that we join issue. But I would appeal to the Prime Minister to state whether he is going to stand by the Colonial Secretary or not. If he is not, we are entitled to demand in the interest of the Constitutional Government of this country that the Colonial Secretary should no longer remain a member of a Government which abjures his principles and declines his policy.

*MR. MALCOLM (Suffolk, Stowmarket): This debate has been labelled with many adjectives. It has been called sham, interesting, embarrassing, inconvenient; but whichever be the appropriate adjective, I think every one will admit that this has been the biggest free trade demonstration since the Corn Laws were repealed. After a great deal of deliberation, and uneasiness, I have come to the conclusion that it is my duty to vote for the Government on this occasion; and I should like to recommend this attitude of Party loyalty to certain hon. friends on this side of the House, who, with unnecessary violence, when some weeks ago some of us disagreed with the Government, advised us to cross to the other side of the House. I desire now to vote for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I hope he will perhaps be able to do something for me. For six months after the last Budget it was my good or ill fortune to go about the country a good deal, trying to persuade the people that the corn tax was going to be felt by nobody, and to be paid entirely by the foreigner. What am I now to do? I would be enormously assisted if the Chancellor of the Exchequer would provide me with a speech which I could use, without stultifying myself too much, in explaining to the people that I was wrong during all those months. I would put it among the curiosities which adorn the tea-room, and in place of my ordinary refreshment I would endeavour to read, swallow, and inwardly digest my own words. At the same time I would also ask my right hon. friend to provide the Party with some new pamphlet for the new Party organiser, to take the place of the leaflet which was circulated in thousands last year, proving how excellent a thing the corn tax was; unless the new Party organiser has been selected on account of his own proficiency in providing escapes on his own account. In spite of my personal discomfiture, however, I will vote for the Government, because this has been chosen as the battle ground on which the protectionists are going to give battle to the free traders. Last year, I am free to confess, I did vote for this measure as introduced by my right hon. friend the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, thinking that it was a perfectly proper fiscal measure to increase our national revenue for war expenditure. I, for one, was not averse to the proposition that people who voted for the war and thought the war necessary and righteous should feel the pinch of taxation in order to pay for it. But now that on his responsibility the Chancellor of the Exchequer tells us that he can meet his liabilities without this additional taxation, I am perfectly convinced that the just and right thing to do is for the right hon. Gentleman to remove this tax from the food of the people. I am extremely glad to find that he has done it. No doubt a rumour has got abroad that if this tax were to be kept on it would be used firstly as a lever to increase itself; in the second place as a lever to impose similar taxation upon other articles of primary necessity; and in the third place that it might pave the way for a fiscal change whose beginning is only just foreshadowed, but whose end nobody can foretell. I am not the slave of any shibboleth at all. If protectionists tell me that the people would be better off—better clothed, fed, and educated—by reverting to the system of protection, and could prove that, I would cease to be a free trader, but I am not going to become a protectionist on their saying so. They must show me figures and facts which at least I can understand, and I will be prepared to consider their position. At present I am convinced that such taxation as the corn tax is not necessary, that it presses hardly on some people, and that it is inadvisable for all; and, because the whole question is inextricably mixed up with some nebulous scheme of protection or preferential tariffs which I do not yet understand, I ask earnestly for guidance from the leaders of my Party.

*MR. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): The hon. Member who has just spoken desires guidance and light in this matter from the leaders of his Party. It appears to me that those who are at present in doubt as to the policy of the Government are like men groping about in a marsh on a dark night. On the one hand there is a certain light from the will-o'-the-wisp of the Colonial Office, and on the other hand there is the steadier, though rather dim light, from the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary to the Treasury. I am very glad that the hon. Member has taken a sound line with regard to the general policy on which the trade of the country should be governed. I understand that he supported the tax last year because on the one hand it was described as a war tax, and on the other because it would be a broadening of the general basis of taxation of the country. Either one or other of these principles was sound, and for my part I am utterly at a loss to know how these two positions can be reconciled one with another. My object in rising is to refer to the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth. He left his seat where he usually sits below the gangway in order to fire what appeared to be a protectionist broadside at the devoted head of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who sat immediately below him. In the course of his speech he said that the population of the country had increased during the past fifty years by at least one-third.

MR. DUKE: I said that it had increased one-third since 1870.

*MR. STEVENSON: Well, since 1870. That makes out a stronger case for free trade. If there are 10,000,000 mouths more to feed now it appears to me that supplies 10,000,000 more arguments in favour of the free trade case. But the hon. and learned Gentleman referred to the case of the agricultural interest, and as one who has sat for eighteen years for an agricultural constituency, I think I am entitled to speak on agricultural matters as well as the hon. Member for Plymouth. There are various shades of the agricultural interest. As far as agricultural labourers are concerned, there are men still living who remember the days of protection, and the miserable food and wages of those times. The recollection of those days weighs upon them like a hideous nightmare. In the past fifteen or twenty years there has been among farmers a change of opinion, due, not to any theory, but to the gradually changing conditions of agriculture. Live stock now plays a very much more important part in the life of a farm than was formerly the case, and in order to feed live stock, it is necessary to have feeding stuffs at a reasonable and cheap rate. At the present time it is only the best kind of barley and the best kind of wheat that is sent to market. The rest is consumed on the farm and supplemented in a very large, and in many districts to an increasing, extent by means of food stuffs obtained from abroad, and it is a matter of the greatest importance that these supplies should be obtained at a cheap rate. If the policy which would be involved in the retention of the corn tax were enlarged and extended by such proposals as have been recently put forth in the country, the effect would be to encourage in the colonies, to our detriment, the growth of meat for the purpose of importation into this country. I believe there is nothing in the world would do more injury to the farming interest of this country than a policy of that kind. Those who think that by a policy of that kind they would greatly assist the farming interest are greatly deceiving themselves and others. It would have a directly opposite effect, and the agriculture of the country would suffer to an extent and in a manner in which it has not suffered even in the most gloomy days of the past. Therefore, the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth and others who got up to speak on the agricultural interest are surely ignoring the changed conditions that have come over the country, and also the change of feeling that has come over the classes engaged in agriculture, and also the consumers, who are themselves, to a great extent, concerned in agricultural pursuits.

We all desire that the depression in the agricultural districts should come to an end. We all desire that means should be provided for restoring the soil to the population which they have so largely lost. But that is not to be done by artifices of this kind. It is to other directions that we must look for remedies, and we must leave suggestions of this kind to be relegated to those who still believe in the principles shared by the Colonial Secretary and by the hon. Member for the Central Division of Sheffield. At this time our only desire is to ascertain what is the mind of the Prime Minister in regard to this great question. Although the debate has been limited to the question of the remission of the corn duty we all of us have a wider topic in our minds, and we are all desirous to know what is the mind of the Prime Minister with regard to that infinitely greater and wider subject—a subject that goes to the very root and vitality of this Empire and affects the solvency of the great industries on which the prosperity of this country depends. At present there is divided opinion on the part of the Government. We have free trade expressions from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and we have opinions of an opposite kind coming from the Colonial Secretary. It is impossible that this House or the country should be satisfied with that state of things, and we are anxious that the Prime Minister should steer his Party and the House out of this Slough of Despond into which those flickering lights are leading them.

*SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigtonshire): It is not my intention to follow hon. Members into those questions of free trade and protection, even within the limits which you, Mr. Speaker, have prescribed. The few observations which I will venture to address to the House will be of a somewhat personal character. I have had the honour of sitting in the House for nearly a quarter of a century, and I cannot call to mind any occasion on which I have felt the obligation, or at all events obeyed the obligation, of voting against my Party and Party leaders, until the present. I feel that obligation on this occasion, and it is one which causes me considerable pain. I am unwilling to give a silent vote. I have looked for guidance to the quarter where I have been accustomed to look for it, and where in the past I have been accustomed to obtain it, and I have looked on this occasion in vain. I find divided counsels, ambiguous utterances, contradictory principles, and, therefore, I am obliged to take my own line. I have looked to the Prime Minister for guidance on a question of this great importance, but I find little light in his benevolent sophistries. I have looked to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and find still less guidance in his less intelligible casuistries, and, therefore, I am obliged to rely upon my own judgment. [Laughter from the OPPOSITION Benches.] My own judgment may appear to be a light thing to hon. Members opposite, but it has not been arrived at without some searching of heart, some reflection, and some consultation with historical precedent, and I do find a great difficulty in detecting in the history of the past century any parallel to the present occasion. I have heard it said that under Lord Liverpool's Ministry there was a great question, that of Catholic Emancipation, which was treated as an open question in the Cabinet; and Mr. Canning and Lord Castlereagh used to rise from that bench where they sat side by side, and speaking diametrically opposite opinions. But it is obvious that there was then a peculiar condition, which it is unnecessary to specify, and which has no existence now. Why have we the present contradictory counsels from that bench? Not only between separate leaders, but contradictions upon the very utterances of the same leader within a few weeks. I am very glad to see the Chancellor of the Exchequer come into the House. I was not present last night to hear his speech, but I read it with amazement this morning, because I remember that on 8th April, little better than two months ago, he received in his private room behind Mr. Speaker's Chair, a Deputation from the Parliamentary Committee of Co-operative Societies, which number 1,600 throughout the Kingdom; and he addressed them in what appeared to me to be a most reasonable and intelligent manner. But it was a manner wholly irreconcilable with what he said last night. He said—

> "Did they really think that the demand (for the repeal of the corn tax) which they had put forward was reasonable, having regard to all the circumstances of the case? They were asking the Government to arrange for carrying on the affairs of the country without any contributions from the working classes at all. In regard to the corn tax it had remained on at the very hey-day of free trade, and if it was protective in a sense, it had enabled the great free traders of the past to disregard the smallness of the protection as something not worth counting, and that was the position now. It was not really protective in the ordinary sense. He did not suppose that a single acre of wheat more had been grown in this country because of the shilling duty on corn."

*MR. RITCHIE: I am sorry to interrupt my right hon. friend, but the deputation which came to me did not ask only for the corn tax to be removed, but for a free breakfast table, and it was in my answer to the demand for a free breakfast table that I made the observation that I could not assent to any proposition which was going to relieve the working classes from their proper share of taxation, while they had their share of political power. And with regard to the corn tax I am perfectly prepared to make the same declaration now—that the shilling registration duty is not a protective duty.

*SIR HERBERT MAXWELL: I have not at hand the report o the speech which my right hon. friend made last night; but the impression made on my mind, and I am sure on the mind of any intelligent person in the country, was that the Chancellor's speech last night is wholly irreconcilable with that of April 8th. At all events they represent a different attitude of mind.

*MR. RITCHIE: Not the least.

*SIR HERBERT MAXWELL: At all events my right hon. friend must admit that his speech of April 8th compared with that of June 9th is liable to misrepresentation. With regard to this tax. It is spoken of as a protective tax, and we who demur to its removal are regarded as protectionists. Well, it is idle in me to disclaim the term protectionist. I am not a protectionist, but that is not here or there. What I want hon. Members and the public to consider is the absurdity of applying the term protection to a shilling duty on corn. If one wants to find what protection really was let us go back to the year 1828, when Mr. Huskinson was President of the Board of Trade. That right hon. Gentleman then handed in his resignation because he could not attain what he considered a proper remission of the duties on corn; but he withdrew his resignation on what condition? Upon receiving the assurance that the duty on wheat should not exceed twenty shillings a quarter unless the price of wheat fell below sixty shillings a quarter. That was protection, and to compare protection of that nature with a shilling duty on corn, appears to me to lead to a confusion of the issue and to an abuse of terms. It is impossible for me to go back on the vote I gave last year in support of the shilling registration duty on corn as proposed by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, and to support its remission on the present occasion.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs): No one who has listened more especially to the last two or three speeches can have failed to express some commiseration with the perplexities of hon. Members opposite. They have during the last few months expended such large quantities of sympathy on this side of the House, that we are only too delighted to return them the compliment when the opportunity occurs. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has complained, I think rightly, that the Government has not treated him, or those who supported the corn tax last year, very fairly. I do not think they have treated the colonies fairly either. They led the colonies to believe undoubtedly, at least that is the inference which they drew, that this tax was imposed with the view to make some remission or trade preference in their favour. It was rather extraordinary that shortly before the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget Speech, an answer was given in the Canadian Parliament to a Motion made from the Opposition of the House in favour of preferential tariffs. The Canadian Minister of Finance said there were negotiations pending in London. A corn tax was to be imposed. Mr. Chamberlain was in South Africa, and he deplored that, but Mr. Chamberlain was coming back soon. And then the Canadian Minister went on to say that the Budget speech of the British Chancellor of the Exchequer had not yet been delivered, but that when that speech was delivered he expected something to be said by the British Government in connection with preferential tariffs. That shows that the colonies had been led to believe that by the imposition of this corn tax something was to be done in the way of preferential tariffs. What is the position at the present moment? The Colonial Secretary, who has been pressing this matter to the front, and arguing in favour of a tax on food with the view of giving a preference to the colonies, and has made certain pronouncements on the subject in the course of our discussions, has not been here to-night. [MINISTERIAL cries of "Yes."] Yes, I know; the right hon. Gentleman is silent; he has been put under hatches by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is now sitting on his head. But at any rate the Colonial Secretary, who more or less induced the colonies to believe that this corn tax was to be used as a means of preferential trade between the colonies and this country, has practically run away from that position. He has retired to his tent. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No."] Where has he retired to, then? I know there are other means of retiring. He is sighing because there are no more Parties to split.

But a much more serious position has been created by the Prime Minister. My right hon. friend sitting below me said that the Prime Minister was not going to burn his boats. That may be so, but he has anchored out in mid stream. The Prime Minister may not be either on one side or the other of the Rubicon, but he has a hawser probably on both sides. There is one alongside him now, but the other is not here. Well, now I think the House is entitled to know from the Prime Minister what his position is. There was a situation like this in Canada within the last twelve months. We there had a Minister who promulgated a policy on his own account; and what happened? His colleagues did not believe in him, and the Prime Minister, who is a real Prime Minister, dismissed him. What is going to happen to the Colonial Secretary? He has pledged the Party to protection. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No."] At any rate, if he has not pledged the Party he has pledged the Leader of the Party. We hear that he has offered to resign. [AN HON. MEMBER, "No."] An hon. Member says "No," but what does the Prime Minister say about it? I really think the House of Commons is entitled to guidance from the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister did undoubtedly lead the House of Commons to believe a fortnight ago that he supported the policy of the Colonial Secretary. He made a speech on the question. He said he was not in favour of taxing raw materials, but of taxing food. The Colonial Secretary said he was in favour of a tax on corn in order to give a preference to the colonies. But since then the Chancellor of the Exchequer has repudiated the Prime Minister. Something has been said about mutiny. What I want to know is, who are the mutineers? It cannot be the Prime Minister, because he is the captain; and it cannot be the Colonial Secretary, because he is the captain's chief mate or guide. But here is the Chancellor of the Exchequer who repudiates his captain and throws him overboard. He is the rank leader of the mutiny. I think we are entitled to know what is to be done with these mutineers, and on what principle the ship is to be run. We want to know what is to be done with the Colonial Secretary. We told hon. Gentlemen opposite years ago what the Colonial Secretary would do. He is an excellent advocate in a bad cause, but a very bad family solicitor. He has squandered the political fortunes of hon. Gentlemen opposite, and now he is going to invest the balance in these colonial preferences. What is the Prime Minister going to do? That is what the House is entitled to know. I have a great respect for the

Prime Minister; we all have; in fact I have more respect for the Prime Minister than he has for himself. I did not think it possible that he could stand in this humiliating position. He is the First Lord of the Treasury, with every other person on the Treasury Bench presumably under him, but he has been thrown over by all his subordinates; by even the latest recruit to the Treasury Bench. The principal has been repudiated by the office boy. That is the present position. Unmistakably, the Prime Minister did commit his Party to the policy of the protection of food as far as he could; and that a fortnight ago. We have heard a great deal about taking the opinion of the constituencies. Why do you not take the opinion of the constituencies? The hon. and learned Member for Plymouth rather taunted us with it. He said "Consult your constituencies." We are perfectly willing.

MR. DUKE: I was only speaking of my own constituents, and I said I thought I knew their mind.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The hon. and learned Member will have a much better opportunity of knowing their mind if he can only persuade the Prime Minister to give them the chance of expressing their opinion on this subject. The issue is a perfectly clear one for us—no preferential tariffs in either religion or commerce. That is the policy we want the opinion of the country upon. Here is free trade, which this country has prospered by adhering to. The moment there is any difficulty at all, it is to be thrown away. That is not worthy of this country; and I say that the sooner we have the Prime Minister making a clear declaration as to what the policy of the Government is and giving the country an opportunity of pronouncing upon it the better.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I almost feel inclined to preface the not very lengthy remarks which I mean to address to the House by asking you, Sir, whether I shall be in order in speaking to the Amendment? The hon. Member who has just sat down, the hon. Member who preceded him, and the hon. Members before him in almost endless succession have absolutely ignored the issue before the House. Successive speakers have ignored the subject on which we are about to vote, and have devoted themselves to subjects with which we are not at all concerned. The actual topic before the House is the Budget for the year 1903. But as far as I can gather, from the tenor of the speeches which I have heard from both sides of the House, no interest whatever is felt in the Budget of 1903. Hon. and right hon. Gentlemen are occupied in conjuring up real or imaginary Budgets for the years 1905, 1906, and 1907. I am sure that those Budgets will be very interesting topics; but they are not the topic before the House; and, though I shall feel myself obliged to reply to certain personal attacks made upon myself, it seems to me that I should be grossly transgressing the rules of debate laid down by Mr. Speaker if I were wholly to ignore and be absolutely silent upon the Amendment so ably introduced twenty-four hours ago by my right hon. friend. If no one else remembers it I will remember it. May I say that this debate, interesting in many respects as it has been, besides being irrelevant, has given food for much interesting reflection on various side issues, and has given rise to various curious Parliamentary episodes? My hon. and gallant friend the Member for the Fareham Division of Hampshire made a very interesting speech this afternoon, in which he stated to an astonished House that he agreed so much with His Majesty's Government that he proposed to vote against them—a novel Parliamentary proceeding, though one which may perhaps have its justification. Then there is my hon. friend the Member for Wigtonshire, who speaks with quite exceptional authority upon the Parliamentary and political history of this country, and who attacked me for not having given him guidance in this debate. Well, except by thought transference I could not give him guidance, for I had not spoken; and it is rather hard that he should complain of my silence on the subject when he must know that it is the practice in this House for the Leaders on the two sides to speak late in the course of the debate. Then there was another hon. friend of mine, the Member for the Stowmarket Division, who bitterly complained of the Government, because, he said, he had been going about the country all through the autumn explaining to his constituents, and to the constituents of a great many other people, so far as I understood, that this corn tax—which I hope the House is about to repeal—did not fall upon the consumer at all. Well, that may or may not be the case as a matter of economic fact; but my hon. friend went on to say that he had voted for it last year because, in his opinion, if the general population of this country desired to support the Government in a war it was only proper that they should pay for it. I really cannot reconcile the two statements of my hon. friend. If he voted for the tax at this time last year because it fell upon everybody I cannot understand how he reconciles with that view the fact that he went about the country, according to his own account, describing it to his constituents, and to the constituents of other people, as a tax which did not fall upon the consumer at all but on the producer in America and elsewhere.

Then there is one other topic on which I will say only a word, partly because of the intrinsic interest of the subject, and partly because of the importance of the right hon. Gentleman who brought it before the House. I allude to a portion of the speech of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Berwick. That right hon. Gentleman, I think almost exceeding the latitude which the speakers in this debate have given themselves on this Amendment, appeared to think that the most important effect of either the shilling duty on corn or of any small duty on corn of a like nature related to its effect on the physique of the population of this country. [An HON. MEMBER: No.] Well, I gather that the right hon. Baronet is not here, and I do not want, therefore, to deal further with the subject. But I will content myself with saying that, although I think the subject of the physique of our race is probably the most important topic which can exercise the mind and the intelligence of any person dealing with social phenomena, I cannot believe that it has any relation to this topic at all; because it was the fathers and the grandfathers of the schoolchildren who my right hon. friend the Member for Cambridge University thinks are to be injured by this kind of tax, who were brought up when wheat was at 60s. and 70s. a quarter, and when the tax upon it was £1 a quarter, and their degenerate descendants, whose physique we are asked to consider, have come into being at a time when free trade in corn has been in existence for more than a generation, during which there has been no duty on corn, and its average price has been incomparably lower than it was in the old days. I only mention these facts in order to put out of the way what I think is a quite irrelevant issue Whatever be the cause of the phenomenon, if that phenomenon be true, of which personally I have some doubt, that the physique of the race has diminished, it must be—according to the familiar form of argument of *post hoc* being equivalent to *propter hoc*—it must be due to free trade and free corn—a paradox which I recommend to the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Berwick, if he does me the honour to read a speech to which he has not been able to listen. Now I come for a brief space to the universally ignored topic of the merits of my right hon. friend's Amendment. I think of all Members in this House I might be absolved from any detailed reference to it, because my right hon. friend, while introducing a deputation to me a month ago, made very much the same speech as he made to the House yesterday; and if I replied to it now it would necessarily be very much in the same speech as I made then. He had the opportunity of replying to that speech when he brought forward his Amendment; but I do not see that he has done so, and I really do not think that I need detain the House at any great length on the merits of the question. But let me briefly say that I think the charge that we have broken any pledge, expressed or implied, as to the permanence of this tax is wholly absurd. It is perfectly true that we refused last year, that my right hon. friend the late Chancellor of the Exchequer refused on behalf of the Government, to make this a tax for a year. It would have been folly to do so. But the fact that the tax was not made an annual tax does not throw any obligation upon the

Government, and could not do so, to continue it for more than a year; and when I tell the House, as they probably remember, that the peace came after the tax had been proposed and before it was passed, and that it was considered whether that was not a reason for dropping the tax, they will see that, in the opinion of the Government, last year at all events, there was no obligation of the kind which some hon. Gentlemen have suggested.

Then, we have been told by my hon. friend the Member for one of the Sussex Divisions, by my hon. friend the Member for Stowmarket, and other Members on this side of the House, that they have gone about the country using arguments in favour of the tax, and that now that the tax has been abandoned those arguments have fallen to the ground. Well, I do not know where my hon. friend the Member for Stowmarket got his arguments. I was so cut to the heart by my hon. friend's reproaches that I sent out for the speech I made in favour of this tax, and I went through the painful process of reading my own production; and I can assure my hon. friend that if he confined himself to the arguments I, at all events, used, he need be in no difficulty. There is not a single argument that I used from which I withdraw a hairs breadth. The tax was a perfectly legitimate and proper tax. It was not put on for protective purposes, and I do not believe that, so far as corn is concerned, it has had any material protective effect. I do not believe that it has been a heavy burden on the people, and it seemed to me then, as it seems to me now, that this is not a duty of which either the free trader as such, or the social reformer as such, had the smallest reason seriously to complain. Yes, but is that a reason for keeping on the tax permanently? The right hon. Member for East Fife, who made a brilliant speech earlier in the afternoon, said that nobody could understand why the tax was put on—that ninety-nine out of 100 Members in the House could not understand why the tax was put on, or why, having been put on, it was taken off. Really the reason is so prosaic that I hardly like to give it. The reason we put the tax on was that we wanted money, and the reason we took it off was that we ceased to want money. It is not a very elaborate proposition, surely. I do not know why any further explanation should really be required.

Before concluding this branch of my speech I must make two further observations. We brought in the tax as a non-protective duty. We did not bring it in to benefit the farmer or the miller, we brought it in to get money. Then how is it we are charged with inconsistency because some of the farmers, according to the right hon. Gentleman, and some of the millers, say the tax really did benefit them, and object to its being taken off? There is no inconsistency there. My right hon. friend says the tax proved to be a protective tax in regard to the miller. If so, it was a mistake. It may have been a beneficial mistake. I will not argue that point. It was a mistake; it was not the object of those who put on the tax; and, therefore, if consistency is to come in at all, the fact that the tax is proved to have an effect which the framers of it never contemplated is a reason, not for keeping it on but for taking it off. I recommend that to my right hon. friend when he charges us with inconsistency. But there is another point which I think of far greater importance connected with the Amendment of my right hon. friend. I have some doubts whether we did make the mistake with which we are charged. In other words I have sometimes doubted whether the tax is protective to the miller to the degree which is asserted. But, without going into that, let me say that I frankly for myself admit that there was one phase of the tax of which I did not fully appreciate the consequences. I was perfectly aware, of course, as we are all aware, that this was a tax, not merely on grain for human consumption, but of a great many forms of imports which are used as feeding stuffs. I was reproached with imperfect acquaintance with the results of the tax. I submit to the reproach with meekness and humility. I confess I was not aware of how great a tax this was upon raw material used by the farmer in his industry. That did come upon me a few weeks ago as a surprise. It turns out. I will not say that the farmer is paying, but that there is a tax upon the raw material of the farmer, amounting to something between one-fourth and one fifth of the whole produce of this tax; so that the farmer, and I believe the farmer alone, is subjected to a tax on his raw material from which his foreign competitor is free. The foreign importer, whether it be of meat or of stock, is not subject to this tax. The farmer who breeds stock in this country and uses feeding stuffs, the dairy farmer in this country, is subject to a tax from which his rivals are free. What is the reply of my right hon. friend to that fact? He does not deny it, but replies that the farmers are the best judges whether this hurts them or not. He says they would like the shilling duty to be continued, and, therefore, you are doing them a great injury by abolishing it.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I did not say that. I said the farmers spoke from experience and that the right hon. Gentleman was speaking from theory.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Something between one-fourth and one-fifth of a tax of £2,500,000 is charged on the raw material of the farmer. That is not what is called theory. It is more than theory. I greatly distrust opinions like those which my right hon. friend has expressed on an occasion of this sort, because I doubt whether they express the matured convictions of the farmers after long experience of the facts. I remember twenty-three years ago, in 1880, when Mr. Gladstone introduced his first Budget in that Parliament, in which he announced the repeal of the malt tax, my right hon. friend getting up on behalf of the agricultural community and with an eloquence which has not diminished, thanking Mr. Gladstone for the great boon he had given to the farmers. There is not a farmer in this country who does not know that the worst thing ever done for agriculture, since the repeal of the Corn Laws, was the repeal of the malt tax. I have some distrust of these hasty generalisations, founded, as I know they are, not on actual experience of facts, but on hopes which gentlemen of protectionist proclivities entertain as to consequences which might ensue. I do not think really that I need detain the House any more upon the subject of the Amendment. We have heard all the arguments on the one side and the other. Upon that subject, at all events, I have inside this House and outside this House given my reasons, absolutely consistent with everything I said last year on the subject, why the Government have not been ill-advised in choosing this form of making the necessary remission of indirect taxation.

Now I come to some of the other topics less obviously connected, if I may put it mildly, with the Amendment before the House than the matters which I have been venturing to lay before hon. Gentlemen. It is quite obvious, as I think I have already indicated, that the House do not care one farthing about the Amendment on which they are going to divide. They are even indifferent to the Budget to which that Amendment is moved. [OPPOSITION cries of "No."] Well, I have heard very little about the Budget. It may be that hon. Gentlemen have been suppressing their feelings. If so, they have suppressed them with remarkable success. What they are interested in apparently is certain constitutional questions — Ministerial responsibility and the like— and certain other questions connected with possible fiscal consequences which they think are going to loom very largely in the future. On Ministerial responsibility, let me say that I think a very great deal of misapprehension prevails. What do we require of a Cabinet, whether drawn from hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite or from Members on this side of the House? What we require is common action and common responsibility. Nobody asks for uniformity of speech. Nobody who knows how human nature is constituted, nobody who knows how Cabinets are constituted will expect among members of a Cabinet absolute uniformity of opinion. I have been fortunate in my political career in having to act with colleagues who, I believe, have been remarkable for unanimity of opinion upon great questions with which they have had to deal. I do not know that right hon. Gentlemen opposite have had the same happy experience. I make no complaint from a constitutional point of view, or, indeed, from any point of view, of differences that have existed among right hon. Gentlemen opposite and which are known to have existed, for example, in Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet of 1880, in Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet of 1892, and in Lord Rosebery's Cabinet of 1894. It would not be proper for me to deal with this topic in detail. It is enough to say the fact is known that there were the greatest differences of opinion, and this will not be denied; but it was no affair of mine, it was no affair of the then Opposition, there was Ministerial unanimity of action, there was Ministerial uniformity of action, there was Ministerial responsibility. I heard cheers when I used the words Ministerial uniformity of action, and I think those cheers must have been evoked by the impression that I said uniformity of speech, but this there was not. Mr. Gladstone was continually taunted by us who were in Opposition, with the fact that his colleagues made speeches upon various controversial topics which were not in conformity with the declared policy of the Cabinet to which they belonged; and Mr. Gladstone invariably held, and I think rightly held, that this was not his affair, this was not his business. His business was the common action of the Cabinet, the common responsibility of the Cabinet. In any Cabinet of any Government if a member does not think he is justified in giving in his resignation he is responsible for the common action of the Government of which he forms a part. That is true, sound, constitutional doctrine; and you will do no good, you will not improve the constitutional traditions or practice of this country, if you endeavour to do what Mr. Gladstone never endeavoured to do—to draw tighter the bands of Party discipline than on the lines I have ventured to sketch; and certainly I, who have never felt myself bound in the way some Members think a Minister should be bound, am not going to exercise over my colleagues an authority I would never submit to myself. That is my view at all events, and I do not think it will be contradicted by right hon. Gentlemen opposite who have served in many Cabinets or are well acquainted with the constitutional history of the country.

I leave this broad question to deal with the narrower issue raised, directly or indirectly, in or out of order, by almost every speaker. But I do not mean to treat this subject—it would be grossly improper for me to do so—so to speak, on its merits; I am going to confine myself to replying to the personal charges made against myself, and personal appeals, charges made chiefly from the other side and appeals made from both sides of the House. What do those charges amount to, what is their characteristic? I have been told in every tone, from menace to entreaty, that the position of the Government is absolutely impossible, that it is humiliating, that it is humiliating to myself individually, that it is humiliating to the House. I have been told it is unfair to the Party to which I have the honour to belong, that it is unfair to the general body of Members, that it is unfair to the country, that it is unfair to the civilised world, unfair to the universe at large. Well, on what are these charges founded? So far as I can make out the gravamen of the indictment is this, that I have not on behalf of my colleagues, on behalf of the Party I represent, for the moment at all events, in the House and in the country, that I have not made a declaration—not upon the Budget before the country, not on the Budget which is to come before the country next year or the year after—but upon certain great financial, fiscal, colonial, and international problems which have been raised by recent speeches. I profoundly and emphatically dissent against this view of my duty and obligations. I not only feel no humiliation with regard to it, I not only feel no shame at not making any pronouncement such as that which has been so clamorously required of me, but I think it would be a great dereliction of my duty if I attempted on an occasion like this, or on any occasion, to make any pronouncement of the kind which has been demanded of me.

I will now go on to refer to some other matters, and I hope I will not be accused of egotism, and that no charge will be made against me if I have to use the first person singular in any observations I may make. Now, if a fair judgment is to be passed on the course which an individual has to take—and I am trying, as I am bound to, to follow hon. Members who have spoken on both sides of the House—I hold that hon. Members must make some effort to put themselves at the point of view which I hold with regard to the financial and the fiscal condition of the country. I admit at once that I do not belong to that happy band, the self-confident band, who think that the fiscal system established fifty years ago under profoundly different conditions from those which now prevail must necessarily remain unmodified to all time. I do not believe in infallibility, and I do not think that even Sir Robert Peel or Mr. Cobden would claim it. They had not, and could not have, any knowledge of the special problems with which we have to deal; and it seems to me altogether absurd to say that these great fiscal sentiments are to be regarded as sacred utterances given us by some infallible authority never to be questioned and never to be altered. I do not take that view. Of course I do not say that the work of Sir Robert Peel as an administrator, or of Mr. Cobden as a public speaker, and of Mr. Gladstone in his early days, will, in its main outline, not be permanent. I do not believe that we shall ever go back—indeed, I am quite certain that we shall never go back—to the absurd and complicated tariffs which Sir Robert Peel in 1842 set to work gradually to reform. I do not believe that we shall ever go back to a time when the agricultural interests are going to be ranged against the urban interests, and in which it is going to be a fight between those two as to which of their pockets shall be best filled. I regard that part of the controversy as beyond all recall; and for my part I am not sure that I do not regard as the most dangerous enemies of fiscal reform, if and in so far as fiscal reform is required, those who are merely the traditional standard-bearers in a controversy which has long, in my opinion, been outworn and out past. And I go further and say that, whereas the old tax on food was deliberately put on to subserve what was then called "the country interest," no tax on food will ever be put on in this country, in my judgment, except with the full assent of the workers both in town and country.

Does not that differentiate the present position absolutely from the old fight between the owners and occupiers of land on the one side, and the rising manufacturing interests on the other? That is, in my opinion, gone. If in any present or future discussions any man tries to drag them back to that old level, he shows himself totally and absolutely ignorant both of the history and the evolution of economic thought, and of the history and evolution of the industries of his country.

With that preface let me say that I do not belong to the happy band who think that this ancient and traditional system is the most valuable—possibly the only—system under which we can live; I do not belong to the band which say it is beyond criticism; I do not belong to the set of people who say it is profanation to touch it. [OPPOSITION cries of "Who says that?"] Well, I thought everybody on that side of the House did. I may be very stupid, or I may have expressed myself badly, but I was certainly under the impression that I gave a not uncharitable description of every gentleman who has addressed us from those benches in the course of this debate. As regards the question of dealing by what is called "retaliation," which is not, perhaps, a fortunate word, with commercial treaties—in other words, having a weapon in our hands—may I say that my doubts as to our present position are of no new birth, and of no recent date? I turned up to-day with another object, the discomfiture of my right hon. friend the Member for Sleaford on the malt tax, the debate on Mr. Gladstone's Budget of 1880; and I found in it a speech of mine which exactly describes the opinion I have always held on this subject, but which I had forgotten I had ever expressed to the House. Mr. Gladstone was at the moment trying to give something to the French with regard to their wines, in order to get something from the French with regard to their tariffs; and I ventured to point out—I had only been in the House nine years, so I did it, I hope, with becoming modesty—that the possible process of bribing foreign nations by concessions on our tariffs to make them give concessions on their tariffs—a process begun by Mr. Cobden in his great treaty—was coming rapidly to an end, and that I did not see how, in the future, we were to negotiate these tariffs on favourable terms to this country unless we had the power of carrying out something in the nature of retaliation. But since 1881, when I thus spoke, a great deal has happened. We have seen, to begin with, a tariff wall steadily raised against us in every one of the great countries with whom we desire to deal. We have seen, in the second place, an enormous growth of the trust system working behind those tariffs, as to whose operations I am quite convinced that there is no man who knows anything about them who does not feel some disquiet as to the effect they may produce on the great staple industries of our country. And there has been a third phenomenon brought prominently before us by the Prime Ministers of our self-governing colonies—namely, that they do desire, if it can be done, that a closer union should be made with the mother country by fiscal means. I ask the House whether it is my business to ignore all those phenomena?—to say "I put them on one side; I will not allow them to be mooted in the country I will not allow any colleague of mine to touch them; I will not concede even for a moment that they raise questions worthy of examination." As I do not think so I will not say so. I think these are circumstances eminently worthy of investigation by this country, but eminently difficult.

If I have carried the House with me so far, may I now put to them a further question eminently deserving of their serious consideration? It must be necessary from time to time, in a great and complicated community like ours, that great changes—not necessarily fiscal changes—have to be contemplated, and, it may be, tried. What is a Prime Minister, what is a Ministry, to do when he thinks, or they think, the time has come in which examination into the new difficulties raised by new circumstances ought to be undertaken? There are two courses, and, so far as I know, only two courses, open to a Prime Minister or to his colleagues in such circumstances. The one is to mature in silence and in private his or their opinions, to let no hint escape that any doubt has assailed his mind or their minds, and to act in public as if the old system was absolutely impeccable in all its parts. That system has been tried within the memory of living men. It was tried by Sir Robert Peel in 1845. It was tried by Mr. Gladstone in 1886. I do not think it was successful; because what it involves, and what it involved in both these cases, was that the Prime Minister in silence, apart possibly from his colleagues, apart certainly from his Party, and equally certainly from the public, gradually matured a great change of opinion, which he then in the twinkling of an eye, and at a moment's notice, thrust upon his followers. In each case the result was disruption. The Tory Party was destroyed in 1845 for twenty or thirty years, and deprived of all its ablest men. I do not go into 1886. I do not wish to dwell upon it. I do not wish to make a point against anybody on this occasion. I would rather confine myself to Sir Robert Peel's case. Sir Robert Peel came into office as a Minister pledged to retain the corn tax. It is perfectly true he had indicated a leaning towards free trade, but it never was an open question in his Party—just as I believe Mr. Gladstone had for years the germ of the Home Rule policy in his mind, but his Party absolutely knew nothing of it. There are inconveniences in the course which I have adopted on the present occasion. I do not deny it. I have been attacked by friends of mine as well as by opponents for not professing to have concluded convictions upon a thing which I have not got concluded convictions upon. Ought I under these circumstances simply to have brooded over the excessively complicated questions involved, and then, supposing I had come to the conclusion that a great change was required in our system, suddenly to have got up one morning and either written a letter to a paper or made a speech, saying that was henceforth necessarily the policy of any Party of which I happened to be the leader? I think I should have played a very poor part by my friends had I done that. I do not, of course, deny that any change, supposing that any change was necessary—any important change—must produce some division among old friends, some difference of opinion among those who have hitherto acted together. It is inevitable. But at all events let us see that the subject is thoroughly examined, that all the facts and all the arguments are thoroughly understood, so far as they can be, and, if there be a difference of opinion among us, that it shall not go beyond the question on which we differ, shall not strike at the root of Party unity or Party loyalty, shall not be allowed to carry its baneful influence throughout the whole organisation to which we belong.

I wish further to point out—and this will be the last observation that I will address to the House to-night—in all seriousness I wish to point out that this is an incomparably more difficult and an incomparably more complex question than either Sir Robert Peel had to deal with in 1845 or Mr. Gladstone had to deal with in 1886. In 1845, confining myself to that question, it was a question simply between rival interests between the four seas, within the confines of the British islands. It was a question, as I have said, between the agricultural interest and the urban interest. It involved no complex economic doctrine.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Montrose Burghs): Oh.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No complex doctrine. Well, the right hon. Gentlemam shakes his head. All I can say is Mr. Cobden never went beyond the most simple and straightforward arguments on a most limited point. [Mr. Morley dissented.] I will not dispute the matter with the right hon. Gentleman; but at all events, he will admit that the complications or the difficulties arising out of international arrangements never perplexed Sir Robert Peel or Mr. Cobden for a moment.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: He was called the international man because he foresaw all these international perplexities and future arrangements.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: He may have been called the international man. I do not know what the phrase means. I do not in the least know what the phrase means. But if Cobden really foresaw that, thirty-five years or thirty-six years after his death, the doctrines he preached would be less regarded throughout the civilised world than they were when he was alive, and that we, the free trade country which he did so much to make a free trade country, would have, as part of its functions, to make these elaborate negotiations with the protected countries without anything to negotiate with, he was a better prophet than I have given him credit for being. I think that he did not foresee that. That is new; and I think it is difficult. Then again, nobody foresaw these colonial complications. They are entirely novel. What is described, not very happily, as retaliation—but that seems to be the accepted term—is, of course, quite outside any colonial question, or, at all events, is only indirectly involved; but the colonial question raises considerations of extraordinary difficulty and importance, because it involves, not merely public opinion in this country, but public opinion in all our self-governing colonies. Well, then, I am justified in saying that the considerations we have taken into account are incomparably more difficult than those which Sir Robert Peel and the fiscal reformers of his day had to deal with. They may have had political difficulties to overcome, as great as or greater than those with which we have to deal; but the economic problem with which they had to deal was infinitely simpler than that which we now have to consider. Now, Sir, I have, I think the House will admit, explained with perfect candour my views and my position. I should consider that I was but ill-performing my duty, I will not say to my Party, but to the House and to the country, if I were to profess a settled conviction where no settled conviction exists. [OPPOSITION ironical cheers.] There may be hon. Gentlemen, and I gather from that cheer that there are, who think it part of the duty of a Prime Minister to have a settled conviction on every point which may be raised relating either to the present or to the future. I hope they will never have a Prime Minister of that view, though I think there is every probability of their having a Prime Minister who has not a settled conviction even with regard to the present. I admit, of course, that the occasions on which these great problems arise are fortunately rare in the history of the country; but when they do arise, then I earnestly trust that every man who stands at this box in my place will take the course which I am confident I am right in taking at the present time, and say it would be folly and rashness to interfere with a great system which has been in operation all these years without a most careful examination of every side of the problem and, with all due regard to the history and traditions of the past; not to ignore new problems which the ever-changing phases of industrial life present for the decision and the action of statesmen. This is my justification. This is my answer to the appeals and to the attacks which have been made continuously to and upon me during the past two days, and I am convinced that the House and the country, if they will read it in a candid spirit, will admit that—I will not call it the apology — the defence is adequate to the occasion.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): This debate has been, from the first moment of its commencement, almost unprecedented in the experience of any one of us in this House, for many reasons, and especially for this: that it has been conducted under the influence of our rules and practice which, as explained by the Speaker, prevented those who took part in it from entering on the great question which occupies the public mind at the present moment, and speaker after speaker was necessarily, therefore, confined to the mere technical matters dealt with within the four corners of the Budget Bill, and could not—and indeed, was checked if he attempted it—reach those larger questions which, as I say, were of the most interest to us all. But force of circumstances has broken down the barrier. I have noticed as the speeches went on that they became more and more free from those restrictions; and now we have the singular fact that the right hon. Gentleman has made a speech devoted almost entirely to questions outside the Budget Bill, while many Members who took part in the debate as it went on yesterday and to-day, and who possess great knowledge and great power of dealing with the larger questions, have not been able to put their opinions before the House. This constitutes a clear case for the right hon. Gentleman finding some way which will enable the House of Commons to discuss at length and with freedom the vitally important questions raised. It is quite impossible that I or anyone else, or any half dozen or score of Members, should be able to-night to discuss adequately these great issues. I could say something on some of the points which stand out from the rest, but we shall require to consider with great care and elaboration the various matters put forward. I put aside the question of the corn tax, the case for and against which, seeing that it has stood for the last year and is now to be remitted, I agree has been adequately put before the House. The right hon. Gentleman had a good deal to say of the constitutional question, and of the relations of Members of the Cabinet with each other and with the Prime Minister, and of the relations between the Cabinet as a whole and between individual Ministers and the community. The right hon. Gentleman said that you ought to have uniformity of action in a Government, but not necessarily unanimity of opinion, and he quoted cases of Cabinets where there were great divisions of opinion. The cases he quoted, I observed, were cases of Cabinets of which he could have had no personal knowledge whatever; and even supposing what he said were true as to the division of opinion, that was mere conjecture, unless, perhaps, it was founded on communications made by those who sit near him. But I accept the doctrine of the right hon. Gentleman—that uniformity of action is what is required, and that absolute unanimity of opinion cannot be expected. But let me put this to the right hon. Gentleman, who has had some experience in diversity of opinion among colleagues — I take questions which, if they are not living now, were living within the last few years. I take the case of the Catholic University; the right hon. Gentleman has differed from his colleagues, I believe, upon that subject. I take the case of bimetallism; bimetallism appears to have dried up and evaporated altogether; but not very long ago it was a very lively question, and the right hon. Gentleman was the protagonist in the matter, entertaining the strongest opinions. No one complained, no one reproached the right hon. Gentleman with it.

But this year we have another state of affairs altogether with regard to a great question higher and deeper than either of those which I have named. Another state of matters, because a prominent Member of the Government, the most prominent Member except the Prime Minister himself, informs the country that not only is he prepared to revolutionise the fiscal system of the country, but that he will make it the question upon which the next general election is to be decided. There he steps out of the region of opinion; it ceases to be pious opinion, it becomes practical action on the part of a Minister. It is a translation of what might have been but a theory, or but hopes and ambitions entertained by an individual, which are creditable to him, and which he is quite entitled to entertain, and even in reason to express his sympathy with; it passes from that phase altogether, and becomes a positive declaration on the part of His Majesty's Government of the course that they are going to take before the country. That is the point which differentiates entirely this case from the others to which I have referred. And I maintain that for a prominent

Minister to make, and to repeat more than once, the announcement of this intention, and to elaborate it, and bring it into the House, and for the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government to express his sympathy—although he did not go the whole length of speaking of the general election, as far as I remember—yet to say that he had an open mind on the question, and was in favour of considering fully whether these great changes should be introduced, it is this action taken by those two Members of the Government that entitles us to ask, "Is this the settled policy of the Government or is it not?" We should be entitled to ask that even if the other Members of the Government were doing nothing. But we find the Chancellor of the Exchequer bringing in a Finance Budget which actually repeals the tax upon which the whole of this edifice practically was founded; and therefore, in a still stronger degree, I think we are entitled to ask the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues what their policy really is. The policy, as explained by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, is inconsistent to the mind of a plain man—to the average man in this country, with the opinions expressed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary to the Treasury. They made a perfectly courageous and clear statement of their opinions yesterday; we know where we have them; but we wish to know where we have the Prime Minister. I do not think we need ask about the Colonial Secretary. The Prime Minister of the country is drawn, or suspended between those two, and that we should not know in which direction he intends to go and that that state of things should be allowed to continue is not, I think, respectful to the House of Commons or the country. The right hon. Gentleman went on to talk of the question of free trade, and he discoursed at length in answer to arguments that have never been used. I am not aware that anyone here, I, at any rate, have not found anybody who is a fanatical devotee of the precise arrangement that was made fifty years ago.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): Hear, hear.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: We make no fetish or object of worship either of man or of thing or of opinion But what we do say is that the main lines of free trade have been the settled policy of this country for all these years, and that in our opinion the country has prospered under them to an extent that no other country has prospered. If we are told that we must examine into the whole matter from the commencement and see whether the system is to be maintained, then I say that the right hon. Gentlemen opposite, the heads of the Departments of the State, the Colonial Department, the Treasury, the Board of Trade, and so forth, have furnished us within the last few days with facts and figures and full particulars up to date of the trade of this country which, unless they are all entirely wrong and unless they mislead the public to form a wrong opinion, justify abundantly the policy which the country has pursued through all these years. Let those who wish to change it prove that we are losing our trade. It is for them to prove that.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: That is what we want to do.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No, that is not what you want to do. That is not what the right hon. Gentleman said was to be done. We are to go back and to examine into the whole thing as if it was *res integra*, as if it was a new matter, to see if the old theories and policy still hold their ground. I say if you can find fault with it, if you can prove here is a weak point, or there is a weak point, prove it, and we will be ready to consider it. You impute to us a superstitious and senseless adherence to what you call obsolete doctrines. We maintain, on the contrary, that the experience of the country shows that it is your doctrines that are obsolete, that it is your doctrines that are out of date and ought not by any means to be revived. The right hon. Gentleman said that we maintained that the system established fifty years ago should be unmodified to all time, that it had an infallible authority and should never be altered. No one ever contended that. No one among us in this debate, or at any time, has ever said anything which justifies such an assertion. The objection that I make especially, and I believe that the people of this country will make, to the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary is that the taxing of the food of the people in order to establish certain advantages, or for retaliation, as the Prime Minister said, or for arrangements with other countries or the colonies, is a thing which we will oppose to the very utmost of our ability and with a determination in which we shall be backed by the people of the country. We know what the condition of the people of the country is. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University gave the keynote of this debate last night in the powerful speech which he addressed to us, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer also admitted the same fact—that the people of this country are not sufficiently fed at present, and if you tax their food you do them the greatest damage it is possible to do them. I saw in *The Times* of this morning that this was spoken of as the old-fashioned clap-trap about the food of the people. I suppose we shall have—I am not sure we have not had already—clap-trap about civil liberty, clap-trap about the right of free speech, clap-trap about the right of public meeting, and clap-trap about the liberty of conscience. All those doctrines, which are the foundation and the strength and the prosperity and the happiness of this country, are treated as clap trap. Very well, we shall see what the people of the country think. In the meantime, the proposal is that, in order to have something to give, we are to tax anew the food of the people. We used to hear of a submerged tenth in the population. We now know there is a submergeable third. The effect of taxing the food of the people would be to turn the submergeable into the submerged. If this is to be done in order, as I say, to have something to give away, who is to give it, and what is it we are to give? It is the very food and life of the mass of the people of this country that we are to give, for some problematical advantage at the other end of the world. No, Sir, I do not think the people of this country are likely to join in that mad scheme.

But in the meantime the right hon. Gentleman has put it forward at a time when he knows he cannot go on with it. What can the effect be but to disturb and confuse the trade of the country, to affect the trade interests of the country when we know not what may happen, and therefore, to bring danger to the very prosperity which it is the wish of us all to enhance in every respect? Sir, I began by saying that in this hurried way, and at a moment's notice, one cannot meet all the points that the right hon. Gentleman has raised; and unfortunately, all the capable Members of this House who have spoken in the debate have been debarred from taking any part in this great branch of the subject which so far outweighs the other. I therefore trust that it will not be long before we have a full opportunity of discussing as it deserves to be discussed this most vital point in the history of the country.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 424; Noes, 28. (Division List No. 116.)

AYES.

Abraham, W. (*Cork, N.E.*)
Abraham, William (*Rhondda*)
Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Aird, Sir John
Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Allen, Chas. P. (*Glos., Stroud*)
Allhusen, Aug. Henry Eden
Allsopp, Hon. George
Ambrose, Robert
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Arrol, Sir William
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hon. Herbt Hy.
Atherley-Jones, L.
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. HonSirH.
Austin, Sir John
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (*Manch'r*
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barlow, John Emmott
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (*Cork, S.*)
Beach, Rt. Hon. Sir M. Hicks
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.
Beckett, Ernest William
Bhownaggree, Sir M. M.
Bignold, Arthur
Bigwood, James
Black, Alexander William
Blake, Edward
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Boland, John
Bolton, Thomas Dolling
Bond, Edward
Bousfield, William Robert
Bowles, T. Gibson (*Lynn Regis*
Brand, Hon. Arthur G.
Brassey, Albert
Brigg, John
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John

Brown, Sir Alx. H. (*Shropsh.*)
Brown, Geo. M. (*Edinburgh*)
Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
Bryce, Right Hon. James
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Bull, William James
Burke, E. Haviland
Burt, Thomas
Butcher, John George
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Campbell, John (*Armagh, S.*)
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H
Carew, James Laurence
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Causton, Richard Knight
Cautley, Henry Strother
Cavendish, R. F. (*N. Lancs.*)
Cavendish, V. C. W. (*Derbyshire*
Cawley, Frederick
Cayzer, Sir Charles William
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chamberlain, Rt Hon J (*Birm*
Chamberlain, Rt Hn J. A. (*Worc.*
Chamberlayne, T. (*Southmptn*
Channing, Francis Allston
Chapman, Edward
Charrington, Spencer
Churchill, Winston Spencer
Clancy, John Joseph
Clare, Octavius Leigh
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
Cook, Sir Frederick Lucas
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasg.*)
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cox, Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*)
Cranborne, Viscount
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, William Randall

Cripps, Charles Alfred
Crooks, William
Cross, Alexander (*Glasgow*
Cross, Herb. Shepherd (*Bolton*
Crossley, Sir Savile
Cullinan, J.
Cust, Henry John C.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan (*Cardig'n*
Delany, William
Denny, Colonel
Devlin, Chas. Ramsay (*Galway*
Dewar, John A. (*Inverness-sh.*)
Dewar, Sir T. R. (*Tr. Haml'ts*
Dickinson, Robert Edmond
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Digby, John K. D. Wingfield-
Dimsdale, Rt. Hon. Sir Jos. C.
Donelan, Captain A.
Doogan, P. C.
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Doxford, Sir William Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Duncan, J. Hastings
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Edwards, Frank
Elibank, Master of
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Ellis, John Edward
Emmott, Alfred
Evans, Sir F. H. (*Maidstone*)
Evans, Saml. T. (*Glamorgan*)
Faber, E. B. (*Hants, W.*)
Faber, George Denison (*York*)
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (*Leith*
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Manc'r*
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
Fison, Frederick William
FitzGerald, Sir Robert Penrose

Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Foster, Sir Walter (*Derby Co.*)
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Fuller, J. M. F.
Fyler, John Arthur
Galloway, William Johnson
Garfit, William
Gilhooly, James
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert J.
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Godson, Sir Augustus Frederick
Gordon, Hn J E (*Elgin and Nairn*
Gore, Hn. G R. C. Ormsby- (*Salop*
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir John Eldon
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Grant, Corrie
Gray, Ernest (*West Ham*)
Greene, Sir E. W. (*Bury St. Ed.*
Greene, Hy. D. (*Shrewsbury*)
Greville, Hon. Ronald
Grey, Rt. Hn. Sir E. (*Berwick*
Griffith, Ellis J.
Groves, James Grimble
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Guthrie, Walter Murray
Hain, Edward
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Edward Marshall
Hamilton, Rt Hn Lord G. (*Mid'x*
Hamilton, Marq. of (*Londondy*
Hardie, J. Keir (*Merthyr Tydvil*
Harmsworth, R. Leicester
Harwood, George
Hatch, Ernest Frederick G.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hayden, John Patrick
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Charles Seale-
Hayter, Rt Hon Sir Arthur D.
Heath, James (*Staffords. N. W.*
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemphill, Rt. Hn. Charles H.
Hickman, Sir Alfred
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (*Bristl, E*
Holland, Sir William Henry
Horniman, Frederick John
Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry
Hoult, Joseph
Houston, Robert Paterson
Howard, J. (*Midd., Tott'ham*
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Hutton, Alfred E. (*Morley*)
Jebb, Sir Richard Claverhouse
Joicey, Sir James
Jones, D. Brynmor (*Swansea*)
Jones, William (*Carnarvonsh.*
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kennedy, Patrick James
Kenyon, Hon. G. T. (*Denbigh*
Keswick, William
King, Sir Henry Seymour
Kitson, Sir James
Knowles, Lees
Lambton, Hon. Fredk. Wm.
Langley, Batty
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Law, H. Alex. (*Donegal, W.*)
Lawson, J. Grant (*Yorks., N.R.*)

Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (*Cornwall*)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leamy, Edmund
Lees, Sir Elliott (*Birkenhead*)
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (*Accrington*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leigh, Sir Joseph
Leng, Sir John
Lewis, John Herbert
Llewellyn, Evan Henry
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long, Col. Chas. W. (*Evesham*
Long, Rt. Hon. Walter (*Bristol, S*
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lough, Thomas
Lowe, Francis William
Lowther, C. (*Cumb., Eskdale*)
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*
Lundon, W.
Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
Macdona, John Cumming
MacDonnell, Dr. Mark A.
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Maconochie, A. W.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
M'Arthur, William (*Cornwall*)
M'Calmont, Colonel James
M'Crae, George
M'Iver, Sir Lewis (*Edinburgh W*
M'Kenna, Reginald
M'Killop, W. (*Sligo, North*)
M'Laren, Sir Charles Benj.
Majendie, James A. H.
Malcolm, Ian
Mansfield, Horace Rendall
Markham, Arthur Basil
Massey-Mainwaring, Hn. W. F.
Maxwell, W J H (*Dumfriesshire*
Melville, Beresford Valentine
Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
Milvain, Thomas
Molesworth, Sir Lewis
Montagu, Hon. J. Scott (*Hants.*)
Mooney, John J.
More, Robt. Jasper (*Shropshire*
Morgan, D. J. (*Walthamstow*)
Morgan, Hn. F. (*Monm'thsh.*)
Morgan, J. Lloyd (*Carmarthen*
Morley, Charles (*Breconshire*)
Morley, Rt Hon John (*Montrose*
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Mowbray, Sir Robt. Gray C.
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Murnaghan, George
Murphy, John
Murray, Rt. Hn A Graham (*Bute*
Murray, Chas. J. (*Coventry*)
Murray, Col. Wyndham (*Bath*)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Nolan, Col. John P. (*Galway, N.*
Nolan, Joseph (*Louth, S.*)
Norman, Henry
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, K. (*Tipperary, Mid*)
O'Brien, Patrick (*Kilkenny*)
O'Brien, P. J. *Tipperary, N.*)
O'Connor, Jas. (*Wicklow, W.*)
O'Connor, T. P. (*Liverpool*)

O'Kelly, J. (*Roscommon, N.*)
O'Malley, William
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Palmer, G. Wm. (*Reading*)
Palmer, Walter (*Salisbury*)
Parker, Sir Gilbert
Parkes, Ebenezer
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearson, Sir Weetman D.
Pease, H. Pike (*Darlington*)
Pease, J. A. (*Saffron Walden*)
Pemberton, John S. G.
Percy, Earl
Perks, Robert William
Philipps, John Wynford
Pirie, Duncan V.
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Power, Patrick Joseph
Pretyman, Ernest George
Priestley, Arthur
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Purvis, Robert
Pym, C. Guy
Randles, John S.
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Ratcliff, R. F.
Rattigan, Sir William Henry
Rea, Russell
Reckitt, Harold James
Redmond, Jn. E. (*Waterford*)
Redmond, William (*Clare*)
Reid, James (*Greenock*)
Remnant, James Farquharson
Rickett, J. Compton
Ridley, Hn. M. W. (*Stalybridge*)
Ridley, S. F. (*Bethnal Green*)
Rigg, Richard
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
Roberts, John Bryn (*Eifion*)
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Robertson, Herbert (*Hackney*)
Robson, William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rose, Charles Day
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, John (*Lancashire*
Rutherford, W. W. (*Liverpool*)
Sadler, Col. Samuel Alexander
Samuel, Harry S. (*Limehouse*)
Samuel Herbert L. (*Cleveland*
Samuel, S. M. (*Whitechapel*)
Schwann, Charles E.
Seely, Chas. Hilton (*Lincoln*)
Seely, Maj. J. E. B. (*Isle of Wight*
Shackleton, David James
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw, Charles E. (*Stafford*)
Shaw, Thomas (*Hawick, B.*)
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Sinclair, Louis (*Romford*)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Smith, James Parker (*Lanarks.*

Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spencer, Rt. Hn. C R (*Northants*
Stanley, Hon. A. (*Ormskirk*)
Stanley, Edw. Jas. (*Somerset*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stevenson, Francis S.
Stewart, Sir M. J. M'Taggart
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Stock, James Henry
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Strachey, Sir Edward
Stroyan, John
Sullivan, Donal
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (*Oxf'd Univ*
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Taylor, Theo. C. (*Radcliffe*)
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, A. (*Carmarthen, E.*)
Thomas, Sir A. (*Glam., E.*)
Thomas, David Alfred (*Merthyr*
Thomas, F. Freeman (*Hastings*)
Thomas, J. A. (*Glam., Gower*)
Thomson, F. W. (*York, W. R.*)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomkinson, James
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Tritton, Charles Ernest
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Ure, Alexander
Vincent, Sir Edgar (*Exeter*)
Wallace, Robert
Walrond, Rt Hn. Sir William H.
Walton, Joseph (*Barnsley*)
Wanklyn, James Leslie
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, E. (*Clackmannan*)
Wason, John Cathcart (*Orkney*)
Welby, Lt-Col. A. C. E (*Taunton*
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whiteley, G. (*York, W. R.*)
Whiteley, H. (*Ashton-u.-Lyne*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Williams, O. (*Merioneth*)
Willox, Sir John Archibald
Wilson, F. W. (*Norfolk, Mid*)
Wilson, H. J. (*York, W. R.*)
Wilson, John (*Glasgow*)
Wilson, J. W. (*Worcester., N.*)
Wilson-Todd, Wm. H. (*Yorks.*)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (*Bath*)
Woodhouse, Sir J T (*Huddersf'd*
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Yerburgh, Robt. Armstrong
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Brymer, William Ernest
Carlile, William Walter
Chaplin, Right Hon. Henry
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Davies, Sir H. D. (*Chatham*)
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph
Fitzroy, Hon. Edward Algernon
Gunter, Sir Robert
Halsey, Rt. Hon. Thomas F.
Heaton, John Henniker
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Lee, A. H. (*Hants, Fareham*)
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Lowther, Rt. Hon. Jas. (*Kent*)
MacIver, David (*Liverpool*)
Manners, Lord Cecil
Maxwell, Rt Hn Sir H. E (*Wigt'n*
Quilter, Sir Cuthbert
Renwick, George
Robinson, Brooke
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
Tollemache, Henry James
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. H. (*Sheff'd*
Walker, Col. William Hall
Warde, Colonel C. E.
Welby, Sir Chas. G. E. (*Notts*)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Henry Seton-Karr and Lord Willoughby de Eresby.

Main Question again proposed.

MR. JOSEPH WALTON (Yorkshire, W.R., Barnsley): At this late hour, Sir, I would desire not to continue the debate, but, in view of the fact that we have not had the usual debate on the Budget, it is desirable that the House should have an opportunity for general discussion on the Second Reading of the Finance Bill. I beg to move the adjournment of the debate

MR. A. J BALFOUR; I do not, under the circumstances, propose to resist this Motion, but I hope it will be understood that the debate must be concluded by Friday.

Motion made, and Question, "That the debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Joseph Walton.*)

Put, and agreed to.

Debate to be resumed upon Friday.

*MR. TENNANT (Berwickshire) asked for an assurance that the Employment of Children Bill would not be taken at the conclusion of the debate on the Finance Bill on Friday.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR was prepared to give such assurance.

Adjourned at eighteen minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 11*th June*, 1903.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with :—

Metropolitan District Railway (Various Powers).

The same was ordered to lie on the Table.

North Metropolitan Electric Power Supply. Petition of the North Metropolitan Electric Power Supply Company under their common seal, praying for leave to introduce a Bill to empower the Urban District Council of Willesden to sell their generating station at Willesden to the North Metropolitan Electric Power Supply Company; to confer further powers upon that Company; and for other purposes; together with a copy of the proposed Bill annexed thereto; read, and referred to the Examiners.

Derby Gas Bill [H.L.]. Reported, with Amendments.

Kip's Patents Bill [H.L.]; Pentillie Estate Bill [H.L.]; Lochnell Estate Bill [H.L.]. Committed.

Exeter Corporation Bill [H.L.]. Read 3_a, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Local Government (Transfer of Powers) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 8) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 11) Bill; Naval Works Provisional Order Bill; Forth Navigation Order Confirmation Bill. Brought from the Commons.

Middlesbrough Corporation Bill; Lanarkshire and Dumbartonshire Railway Bill; South Yorkshire Joint Railways Bill; Blackheath and Greenwich District Electric Light Bill; Wolverhampton and Cannock Chase Railway (Extension of Time) Bill; Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Railway Bill; Great Southern and Western Railway Bill; Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland Bill; Mullingar, Kells, and Drogheda Railway Bill. Brought from the Commons; read 1^a; and referred to the Examiners.

Plymouth Corporation Bill; Woolwich Borough Council Bill; Beckenham Urban District Council Bill; Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway (Various Powers) Bill; Great Western Railway Bill; Grindleford, Baslow, and Bakewell Railway Bill; Hainault Forest Bill; London County Council (Money) Bill; Neath, Pontardawe, and Brynaman Railway Bill; North-Eastern Railway Bill; Romford and District Tramways Bill; Wood Green Urban District Council Bill. Brought from the Commons; read 1; and referred to the Examiners.

Faversham Gas Bill [H.L.]; North's Navigation Collieries Bill [H.L.]; Life Association of Scotland Bill [H.L.]; Pelican and British Empire Life Office Bill [H.L.]; Lima Railways Bill [H.L.]; Exeter Railway Bill [H.L.]; All Saints, Poplar (Rate Abolition) Bill [H.L.]. Returned from the Commons agreed to.

London Hydraulic Power Bill. Returned from the Commons with the Amendment agreed to.

Sutton District Water Bill; Bridgwater Gas Bill; East Ardsley Gas Bill. Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to.

Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.], Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Five Lords appointed a Select Committee on the Mid Yorkshire Tramways Bill [H.L.] and other Bills, do form the Select Committee for the consideration of the Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].

Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]; Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]; Water Orders Confirmation

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

Bill [H.L.]. Committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]; Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]; Gas and Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.]. Committed: The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

PETITION.

LAND REGISTERS (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.].

Petition against; of the Faculty of Procurators in Glasgow; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COLLEGE CHARTER ACT, 1871.

Papers respecting: Laid before the House on the 26th of May last, to be printed. (No. 96.)

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION.

The Order made on the 26th of May last for printing return respecting discharged.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that the following papers, having been commanded to be presented to this House by His Majesty, had been so presented on the following dates by delivery to the Clerk of the Parliaments, pursuant to Standing Order No CXI., viz.—

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS, 1902).

Report on the agricultural returns relating to acreage and produce of crops and number of live stock in Great Britain; with summaries for the United Kingdom, British Possessions, and Foreign Countries, and particulars of prices, imports and exports of agricultural produce.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

I Associations constituted under the Voluntary Schools Act, 1897.

II. Associated schools and amounts of aid grant paid.

III. Unassociated schools and amounts of aid grant paid, 1902–1903.

TRADE.

Annual statement of the trade of the United Kingdom with Foreign Countries and British Possessions, 1902, compared with the four preceding years. Volume II.

COMMERCIAL No. 4 (1903).

Suez Canal: Returns of Shipping and Tonnage, 1900, 1901, 1902. (In continuation of Commercial, No. 2 (1902)).

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, dated 28th May 1903, providing for the distribution of the General Aid Grant (with explanatory memorandum).

GENERAL POST OFFICE.

Parcel Post Agreement, with detailed regulations, between Great Britain and the Netherlands.

PUBLIC RECORDS.

Sixty-fourth Annual Report of the deputy keeper of the public records.

EXPLOSIVES ACT, 1875.

Twenty-seventh Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspector of Explosives, being their annual report for the year 1902.

COLONIES (MISCELLANEOUS.)

Papers relating to the investigation of malaria and other tropical diseases, and the establishment of schools of tropical medicine.

TREATY SERIES, No. 8 (1903).

Protocol between the United Kingdom and the United States of Venezuela, relating to the settlement of British claims and other matters; signed at Washington, 13th February 1903; together with agreements for the reference of certain questions to the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague, and for the decision of other claims by a mixed Commission; signed at Washington, 7th May 1903.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

No. 2987. Turkey (Bussorah); No. 2988. California, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona; No. 2989. Germany (Prussian Estimates); No. 2990. Roumania.

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS (IRELAND).

Agricultural statistics of Ireland; with detailed report for the year 1902.

CONGESTED DISTRICTS BOARD (IRELAND).

Report of the Board, for the year ended 31st March 1903.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY.

Forty-sixth Annual Report of the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery, 1902–1903.

SOUTH AFRICA.

Draft Customs Union Convention agreed to by representatives of the British Colonies and Territories in South Africa at a conference at Bloemfontein in March 1903.

DUBLIN METROPOLITAN POLICE.

Statistical Tables for the year 1902.

STRIKES AND LOCK-OUTS, BOARD OF TRADE (LABOUR DEPARTMENT).

Report on the strikes and lock-outs in the United Kingdom in 1902, and on Conciliation and Arbitration Boards.

TRISTAN DA CUNHA.

Further correspondence relating to the Island of Tristan da Cunha. (In continuation of [Cd. 8357], February 1897.)

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

AFRICA, No. 5 (1903).

Return giving dates of purchase and prices paid for rails, sleepers, girders, locomotives, carriages, and bridge work, obtained for the construction and working of the Uganda Railway.

TRADE OF BRITISH POSSESSIONS.

Statement of the value of the Trade of the various British Colonies and Possessions with the United Kingdom, other British Possessions, and Foreign countries during the year 1901.

TRADE REPORTS—I. MISCELLANEOUS SERIES.

No. 592. Italy (Municipalisation of Bakeries of Catania.)

II. ANNUAL SERIES.

No. 2991. Greece (Piræus).
No. 2992. Spain (Cadiz).
No. 2993. France (Réunion).

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Thirtieth Annual Report by the Accountant for Scotland to the Scotch Education Department.

FISHERIES (SCOTLAND).

Twenty-first Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland, being for the year 1902. Part III. Scientific Investigations.

INDIA (CORONATION OF HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII.)

Account of the Durbar held at Delhi, 1st January 1903.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

INEBRIATES ACT, 1898, PRISONS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1877, AND SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND ACTS, 1885–1899.

Rule made by the Secretary for Scotland as to the appointment of a Visiting Committee to the State Inebriate Reformatory at Perth.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1899.

Report by the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords and the Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons.

VICTORIA.

The Constitution Act, 1903.

INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION (IRELAND).

Rule made by the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland appointing the places at which the examinations shall be held in 1903.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (RULES).

Rule, dated 18th May, 1903, as to Assistant Commissioners.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.

Returns relating to the Council.

I. Return showing, up to 31st March, 1903—

The amount of Consolidated Stock.
The application of the money raised by such stock.
The sums carried to the Consolidated Loans Fund.
The application of the Consolidated Loans Fund.

An estimate of the expenditure of the Council for all purposes, for the year ending 31st March, 1904.

II. Return showing, up to the 31st March, 1903.

All moneys raised by the Metropolitan Board of Works and the Council since the passing of the Act for the purposes mentioned in the Act.

Particulars in relation to every parish, district, union, or place in respect whereof a loan has been obtained from the Metropolitan Board of Works or the Council since the passing of the Act.

IMPERIAL INSTITUTE.

Treasury Minute, dated 26th May, 1903, directing that the "Imperial Institute Account" shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General.

SUPERANNUATION (PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS).

I. Treasury Minute, dated 15th May, 1903, declaring that professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired on the public service are required for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of—

Deputy Master and Controller of the Royal Mint; Third Assistant to the Chief Crown Solicitor for Ireland.

II. Treasury Minutes, dated 13th May, 1903, declaring that Joseph Woolverston, Royal Laboratory, War Office; dated 8th June, 1903, declaring that Alfred Robinson, artificer, Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield, were appointed without Civil Service certificates through inadvertence on the part of the head of their Departments.

ALKALI, ETC., WORKS REGULATION ACTS, 1881 AND 1892.

Thirty-ninth Annual Report on Alkali, etc., Works, by the Chief Inspector; Proceedings during the year 1902, presented to the Local Government Board and to the Secretary for Scotland.

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF SURREY).

Order made by the County Council of the county of Surrey ordering that a second polling place be provided for the parish of Godstone at Blindley Heath.

LOCAL LOANS FUND (ACCOUNTS, 1901-1902).

Accounts of receipts and payments by the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt in respect of the capital and income of the Local Loans Fund, for the year ended 31st March, 1902, together with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon.

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION ACT, 1889.

Minute by the Board of Education sanctioning the subjects to be taught under Clause 8 of the Technical Instruction Act, 1889, for the county of Glamorgan.

ARKLOW HARBOUR.

Report of the Arklow Harbour Commissioners and statement of accounts for 1902.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

MEDWAY CONSERVANCY.

Statement of receipts and expenditures of the Conservators, for the year ended 25th March, 1903. Delivered (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

MUNICIPAL TRADING.

Message from the Commons that they have appointed a Committee, to consist of seven Members, to join with a Committee of this House, to consider and report as to the principles which should govern powers given by Bills and Provisional Orders to municipal and other local authorities for industrial enterprise within or without the area of their jurisdiction, and to request that this House appoint an equal number of Lords to be joined with the Members of their House.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Message from the Commons that they have committed the Port of London Bill to a Select Committee of five Members to join with a Committee of this House, and to request that this House appoint an equal number of Lords to be joined with the Members of their House.

THE SERVIAN REVOLUTION.

EARL SPENCER: As I see the noble Marquess the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in his place, I desire to know whether he has any information to give the House regarding the terrible tragedy which has happened in Servia.

***THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of LANSDOWNE)**: My Lords, the information which I have received from various sources leaves, I am sorry to say, no doubt that the King and Queen of Servia were murdered last night. It appears that there perished at the same time a brother of the Queen, two of the Queen's sisters, a general, one of the King's aides-de-camp, and twelve men of the Royal Guard. We are given to understand that the movement was organised by the Servian Army, and that it has led to the proclamation of Prince Peter Karageorgevitch, and the formation of a new Government containing representatives of different parties in the State under a gentleman who formerly held the office of Prime Minister. We are further informed that the Constitution of 1901, which was recently abolished by the late King, has been restored, and that the National Assembly, which was dissolved in March last, has been summoned to meet at once. Another account includes among the number of victims the Prime Minister and the Minister for War.

EARL SPENCER: Can the noble Marquess state how this occurred?

***THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE**: I gather that the Palace was surrounded and attacked, and that these unfortunate persons were done to death.

COUNTY COUNCILS (BILLS IN PARLIAMENT) BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading Read.

LORD KENYON: My Lords, I do not think it will be necessary to take up your time for a long period in proving that this is a necessary and sensible measure. The object of it is to allow County Councils to promote Bills in Parliament. This privilege, as you know, belongs to municipal boroughs and Metropolitan Borough Councils, and even to Urban District Councils throughout the country; and it seems to be an anomalous thing that County Councils, which in many cases are more important bodies, should not be able to promote Bills. In some fifteen instances County Councils have found it necessary to frame Bills, and in those cases they have embodied a clause allowing the expenses of promotion to be paid. But supposing those Bills had not been passed, the expenses of promotion would have fallen on private individuals, and could not have been paid by the County Council. I heard of a case not long ago in South Wales where a free library was unobtainable owing to the fact that the County Council could not promote a Bill to obtain it. In regard to the powers possessed by Municipal Boroughs and others, the consent of the ratepayers has to be obtained and a poll taken by means of voting papers left at the houses. It is obviously impossible, in the case of a county, for voting papers to be left at the door of every voter, and therefore other methods have to be adopted to ensure that only necessary Bills should be promoted. The way in which that is proposed to be done is that before any Bill can be proceeded with a special meeting of the Council has to be advertised, and ten days notice given, and an absolute majority of the Council has to be obtained. The resolution has to be obtained by a further resolution passed in the same way fourteen days after the Bill has been deposited. In that way full publicity is given as to the nature of the Bill which it is desired to promote, and the ratepayers can take the necessary steps to safeguard their interests. I beg to move the Second Reading of the Bill.

Moved, that the Bill be now read 2ª.—(*Lord Kenyon.*)

***THE EARL OF WEMYSS**: My Lords, I have a notice on the Paper which is, I think, in itself a perfect answer to the speech of my noble friend. My notice is to move to resolve—

"That, in view of the appointment of a Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament 'to consider and report as to the principles which should govern powers given by Bills and Provisional Orders to municipal and other local authorities for industrial enterprise within or without the area of their jurisdiction,' this House is of opinion that, pending the Report of such Committee, no Bills of the character of the County Councils Bill or Borough Funds Bill, which would empower the spending of the ratepayers' money in promoting and opposing Bills in Parliament without having first obtained the ratepayers' assent to such expenditure, should be considered by this House."

So far as my experience is concerned, it is an absolutely unique principle that such Bills as these should be introduced pending the Report of a Select Committee of both Houses appointed to consider this question. These Bills alter the present relative position of ratepayers and municipal authorities, diminish the power of the ratepayers, and increase the power of the county authorities. But I am content to rest my case against these Bills upon the wording of my Resolution alone. It is, however, necessary to show to your Lordships the extent to which municipal trading has gone and the danger it involves. This Joint Committee was asked for in 1899 and was appointed in 1900. It took evidence but did not report; and it was suggested that it should be reappointed. The municipal authorities objected to the evidence that was taken before that Committee; they objected to having the light of day thrown upon their proceedings; and for two years nothing was done by the Government. But opinion was so strong in the country that the Government finally gave way and re-appointed the Committee. In the old days local government meant the administration of roads, drains, lighting, water, and other things. There was no question of municipalities trading; but to-day, so I am informed by one who is thoroughly conversant with these things, the local authorities throughout the country are either engaged in the following forms of trading or are seeking Parliamentary powers to enable them to engage in the same:—Gas, water, tramways, electric lighting, omnibuses and motor-car services, manufacture of residual products of gas, provision for entertainments, concerts, etc., refrigerators and manufacture and sale of ice, workmen's dwellings, construction and management of crematoria, bathing machines and tents, the supply of sea water for private purposes, hop growing, slaughter houses, manufacture of steam engines and dynamos, gas and electric fittings, manufacture of paving materials, cold air storage, shops, saloons and refreshment rooms, hotels, Turkish baths, telephones, baths and wash-houses, cycle tracks, municipal banks, and the use of municipal bank notes, municipal pawnbroking, municipal bakeries, and municipal public houses. In the North of England municipal collieries have been under discussion, and the Bradford Corporation have actually proposed to supply coal for retail consumption.

That shows where the ratepayers' money goes, and that instead of diminishing and checking the powers of ratepayers over this expenditure those powers ought to be increased. Whether the Joint Committee to which this question has been referred will increase the power of the ratepayers and put some check on municipalities in regard to municipal trading I do not know, but certainly it seems to me that some check ought to be established. There is no limitation to the amount of rating; the authorities may rate up to 20s. in the pound. In the Public Libraries and other Acts the amount of the rate is limited. That is one check; the other checks are the public meetings of ratepayers to sanction the expenditure. But at such meetings the ratepayers are at a disadvantage, for the municipal authorities practically pack the meeting with people in their own employment and others who vote whichever way they are told. I hold that, in view of the increasingly large army of municipal servants, the ratepayers would only have a proper chance of protecting their own interests if these municipal servants were disfranchised. Supposing that trading by municipalities is successful—a large assumption—is it safe? Are the ratepayers safe? Is the speculation an absolutely safe and sound one? I contend that it is not, in view of the rapidity with which inventions are superseded by others. In conversation some time ago with my noble friend Lord Kelvin, I asked him to jot down the inventions that had been made in his recollection. He did so. They were—development of steam power; improvements in mechanical engineering and textile factories; railway and steam locomotion by land; steam navigation; electric land telegraphs; electric submarine and wireless telegraphy; electric light; electro-chemical works; applications of water power for these, and both steam and water to electric work generally; electric traction on railways, tramways and common road motors, gas engines, oil engines, electric transmission of power and motor traction in general. If municipalities had invested in oil lamps originally, gas superseded them; and in the same way electric light has superseded gas. So it runs on through the whole course.

Not only is this question of municipal trading a serious one as regards the ratepayers, but also from the point of view of national progress. It is not the County Councils who have taken up new inventions, and even in the future they will not dare to take them up until they are thoroughly tested, owing to the risk; whereas, if a speculator takes up an invention, he either brings it to a successful issue—in which case the public benefit—or, he fails, and the public do not lose, as would be the case under the legislation we are asked to sanction to-day, and similar legislation. This is what happens. Where science has invented some great discovery, the municipalities or the State—and I hold that State trading is quite as dangerous as, if not more so than, municipal trading—get a Bill passed through Parliament to take possession of this invention. Take electricity—an absolute instance in point. That very active Minister, Mr. Chamberlain, brought in a Bill which took possession, at the end of twenty years, of all electric works, at the price, not of going concerns, but of the old plant and old iron. What was the result? An absolute stoppage was put to all electrical work in this country, and to such an extent that we have never recovered it, and we are now behind all the rest of the world in regard to electricity. Mr Chamberlain had to come to Parliament and admit that he had made a mistake, and the period was altered from twenty to forty years. No matter what the invention is, however great, it must be remembered that we are always in the infancy of invention. If a speculator is liable to be robbed of the benefit to be gained from working a successful invention, he will not take it up, and so all national progress is stopped. It cannot be denied that this would be the result of stimulating in any way municipal trading. We are progressing without a stop, to what? To the time when individuals will be abolished as traders, when Socialism will be rampant, and when everything will be in the hands of a labour-governed State. Do I exaggerate when I say this? To prove that I do not I would quote the answer given by Mr. Burns at a great meeting some time ago. I asked him whether it was not the case that he and those who acted with him looked forward to everything in the way of property, manufacture, trade, and the distribution of trade being in the hands of a labour-governed State. Mr. Burns simply stood up and nodded assent. I have another authority to show whither this is tending, and what you have to guard against. What are the views of Sir Albert Rollit, the President of the Municipal Association, upon municipal trading? I am told that three or four years ago Sir Albert Rollit said—these are not his actual words, but they convey the effect of what he said—that the time would come when the municipal authorities would determine who should carry on business within the limits of the municipality, and when no business would be allowed therein which the authorities believed they could do better than it could be done by the individual. That is the prospect before your Lordships, a prospect which seems to be encouraged by the Government when they bring in such Bills as this. The Joint Committee to which I have referred will have to consider all these things, and it does appear to me that, pending their inquiry and their decision as to where the line should be drawn in regard to municipal trading, it is absolutely unsound and inconsistent with the practice of Parliament that Bills such as these, which take away from the ratepayers powers that they now possess and give to County Councils additional powers, should be passed into law. It is unbusinesslike and contrary to common sense, and I hope, on those grounds, that your Lordships will support my Amendment.

Amendment moved—

"To leave out all the words after 'That for the purpose of inserting the following words, viz., 'in view of the appointment of a Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament "to consider and report as to the principles which should govern powers given by Bills and Provisional Orders to municipal and other local authorities for industrial enterprise within or without the area of their jurisdiction," this House is of opinion that pending the Report of such Committee, no Bills of the character of the County Councils Bill or Borough Funds Bill, which would empower the spending of the ratepayers' money in promoting and opposing Bills in Parliament without having first obtained the ratepayers' assent to such expenditure, should be considered by this House.' "—(*The Lord Wemyss, E Wemyss*).

*THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Lord BALFOUR of BURLEIGH): My Lords, I would venture to say a few words upon this Bill because it applies to Scotland as well as to England. I think I can put the issue which the House will have to decide quite clearly in a very few words. The noble Earl who has just spoken has mixed up two things which are wholly distinct. A very large part of his speech was, shall I say, more or less appropriate to the next Bill we shall have to discuss—the Borough Funds Bill—but was not appropriate to the Bill now before the House. Let me explain very shortly precisely what this Bill does. The Bill is a Government Bill, and has never been in the hands of Sir Albert Rollit or Mr. Burns.

*THE EARL OF WEMYSS: But the Borough Funds Bill has.

*LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: I am at this moment discussing the County Councils Bill.

*THE EARL OF WEMYSS: The principle is the same.

*LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: I would represent to the House that the course taken by the noble Earl is extremely inconvenient. There are two Bills on the Paper. The issue we have to decide is totally distinct in each case, and surely it is not too much to ask that the discussion should be appropriate to the Bill which is at present before the House. All that this Bill does—it may be a right thing or a wrong thing—but all that it does is to allow County Councils to promote as well as to oppose Bills in Parliament. In the year 1888, under the Local Government Act, Parliament gave County Councils the power to oppose Bills, and the same was done for Scottish County Councils in 1889. But no power was given at that time to promote Bills. In the fifteen years that have elapsed this has been found inconvenient in a certain number of cases. As a matter of fact, County Councils, or some County Councillors, have promoted Bills in some fifteen or sixteen cases, and Parliament, by passing those Bills, has sanctioned the course they have taken. The only question before the House at this moment is this: Is this a right power to give to County Councils, or is it not a right power; and, secondly, are the safeguards which are proposed in the Bill sufficient and satisfactory for the purpose? The safeguards are these: There shall be twice a resolution of the County Council, once before the Bill is introduced and once after the Bill is introduced. In each case an absolute majority of the whole Council is required. All the questions affecting municipal trading are entirely beside the point in connection with this Bill. I put it to the House that, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, County Councils have nothing to do with municipal trading. They do not, as a fact, undertake it at the present time, and I believe they do not desire to acquire powers to undertake it.

If I had to discuss the abstract question of municipal trading with the noble Earl (I make him a present of this admission), I think I should very nearly agree with a great deal that he has said to-day. I am no great friend to municipal trading except in regard to such prime necessities of life as water and gas, if, indeed, these are covered by the term. But that is not really the point which is before us at the present time. What I want to point out to the House is this, that, in the first place, it is not likely that County Councils will either desire to indulge or as a fact indulge in what is called municipal trading. This Bill really does not touch the question at all. County Councils are municipal authorities in the ordinary sense of the term, but they are not municipal authorities in the sense that you speak of municipal trading. I do not think that the wildest opponent of municipal trading has ever contended, or could contend successfully, that the County Councils either of England or Scotland, as a body, are likely to extravagantly indulge themselves in that direction. Most of the undertakings in which local authorities have engaged, and which are called municipal trading, are authorised by general Acts of Parliament, and not by private Acts, such as it would be possible for County Councils to promote under this Bill. The class of enterprise which it is intended in this Bill that County Councils may promote will have regard to roads, bridges, lunatic asylums, and so forth. When you come to such subjects as the building of workmen's houses, electric light undertakings, tramways, baths, waterworks, markets, and so on, if the municipal authority, be it the County Council or the Borough Council, desires to undertake them, they do it under the terms of general Acts, and not under the terms of private Acts which would be promoted under the powers given by this Bill. It may be a right thing or it may be a wrong thing for municipal trading to go as far as it has gone; but, so far as this Bill is concerned which we are now discussing, all the spectres which the noble Earl has conjured up really have nothing to do with the question at issue. A great many of your Lordships are connected with County Councils, and I think I am speaking within the knowledge of nearly all of those who are so connected when I say that this power is one which County Councils all over the country almost unanimously desire. I sincerely hope that, in spite of the suggestions of the noble Earl, some of which I must leave over to answer till we come to the next measure, the Bill will receive the sanction of your Lordships' House.

*THE EARL OF WEMYSS: My noble friend said he did not think it likely that County Councils would take advantage of the powers given them by this Bill to go in for trading. Is there anything in the Bill to prevent their doing so?

*LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: I do not think there is.

*THE EARL OF WEMYSS: Hear, hear.

*LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: But my point is that even so far as the boroughs are concerned, which are to a certain extent open to the charge of undue municipal trading, they have undertaken their enterprises in the main under the powers of general Acts and not under Acts promoted under the powers which would be given by this Bill.

*THE EARL OF WEMYSS: There is no security in the Bill.

LORD BELPER: May I be allowed to say one word, merely as representing the County Councils Association, which comprises all the County Councils in England, and has strongly supported this measure. In answer to the noble Earl who has just remarked that there is nothing in this Bill to prevent municipal trading, let me point out that County Councils have absolutely no power to deal in municipal trading in any way. They have no powers with regard to gas, only limited powers with regard to water, and no powers at all with regard to the different municipal purposes for which boroughs acquire powers from Parliament. This measure has now been before the County Councils some years, for very shortly after the Local Government Act of 1888 was passed, it was found most inconvenient that County Councils could not promote Bills. This is a power which is held and exercised by every municipal borough in England, not only by every small borough within the districts of counties, but also by every urban council. Why, therefore, is the County Council, which is the supreme authority in the county, to be deprived of powers which the smaller authorities possess? The inconvenience caused has been so great that chairmen of County Councils and others have taken upon themselves the responsibility of promoting certain Bills which were absolutely necessary in order properly to carry out the work of the council, and if these measures had not been passed these gentlemen would have been mulcted in the cost of their promotion. I hope the House will not be led away by the idea that this Bill has anything to do with municipal trading or with those who support municipal trading. Sir Albert Rollit, who has been quoted as the head of the Municipal Association, has no more to do with the County Councils than the man in the moon has. He is not a representative of the County Councils in any way; quite the contrary. So far from the object of this Bill being to enable the County Councils to undertake duties which the noble Earl and a great many of us think ought not to be undertaken by municipal authorities, it merely proposes to give County Councils the power to promote as well as to oppose Bills in Parliament in cases where it is necessary. There is ample security given that the ratepayers shall be properly consulted.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: My Lords, I do not rise for the purpose of adding anything to what has fallen from the two noble Lords opposite. I entirely agree with all they have said; but I do think it is desirable that some one who has been for long chairman of a County Council should confirm what has been stated by those two noble Lords. I entirely concur in the importance of giving these powers, which are possessed by municipal boroughs, to County Councils. It was felt at the very commencement of the coming into operation of the Act of 1888 that there was a defect in this respect, and as time has gone on the difficulties that have been created in consequence have been found to increase. The matter has no more to do with the question of municipal trading, as assumed by the noble Earl on the cross benches, than, as the noble Lord opposite said, with the man in the moon. It is merely a question of giving to County Councils the powers which municipal councils possess of promoting Bills in Parliament, and I do not think any one who appreciates the difficulty that has been caused by the present state of affairs will oppose the Bill.

THE DUKE OF RUTLAND: May I suggest to the noble Earl on the cross benches that it would do more to promote the object he has in view if he were to withdraw his Amendment in regard to this Bill and move it when the Borough Funds Bill is under discussion.

*THE EARL OF WEMYSS: My feeling about it is this: that the principle is the same. My argument applies equally to this Bill as to the Borough Funds Bill. My point is not whether this Bill or the other Bill is necessary, but whether, pending the Report of the Joint Committee, two Bills of this character should be considered. I think such a procedure absolutely contrary to common sense.

*LORD BELPER: This Bill gives no power of municipal trading whatever.

*THE EARL OF WEMYSS: It gives County Councils the power to spend money which they cannot spend now, and it gives them this power while a Committee is sitting to consider and report upon the whole question.

*LORD AVEBURY: My Lords, it is true that this Bill does not directly authorise County Councils to embark on industrial enterprises, but it enables them to introduce Bills with that object. County Councils have not as yet shown any desire for municipal trading, and I am not very much afraid that they will show any such desire in the future; but I do not see why we should run the risk. It seems to me that this Bill does not give the ratepayers the protection they have hitherto enjoyed, and will facilitate the expenditure of money for this purpose At the same time I understand that there are other objects which may make it important that County Councils should have some of these powers. I think the case against the Borough Funds Bill is stronger than the case against this Bill, and while I admit that there is more to be said for this Bill than for the Borough Funds Bill, perhaps the objections might be renewed in Committee; still, if the noble Earl presses his Amendment to a division, I shall vote with him.

On Question, whether the words proposed shall stand part of the Motion, resolved in the affirmative: Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next.

BOROUGH FUNDS BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

*LORD KENYON: My Lords, the Bill which I now have the honour to ask your Lordships to read a second time deals with a different question. At present certain restrictions are laid upon Borough Funds with regard to promoting or opposing Bills in Parliament. One of the restrictions is the requirement that the consent of the owners or ratepayers must be obtained, and that any one single owner or ratepayer may demand a poll. It has been urged that no one person should have the power of asking for a poll, and therefore it is proposed to abolish this restriction and to provide that the decision of the meeting in favour of or against the promotion of a Bill or any part or clause thereof, must be final unless not less than 100 parochial electors, or one-twentieth in number of the electors, whichever may be the less, demand a poll in writing. If, however, the decision of the meeting is against the promotion of the Bill or any part or clauses thereof the council themselves may require a poll to be taken. The proposal to allow the local authority to oppose Bills in Parliament without first obtaining the consent of the electors has already been agreed to in the case of County Councils, and it may be assumed that they will not oppose a measure with which the electors are generally in sympathy. The noble Earl included the Borough Funds Bill in his Amendment, and seemed to assume that we were giving additional powers to the authorities and diminishing the powers of the ratepayers, but I would ask your Lordships whether these authorities, being elected by the ratepayers themselves, are not in that sense the servants of the ratepayers to carry out their desires. Further, if the Report of the Select Committee should be adverse to certain classes of trading being undertaken by the various councils, and Parliament were to decide to act upon that Report, there is nothing to prevent the provisions which contravene such decision being struck out of the Bill. As to the powers of municipal trading, I would point out that County Councils are not municipalities, and have not hitherto been accused of desiring to promote Bills for municipal trading. I trust the House will give the Bill a Second Reading.

Moved, that the Bill be now read 2ª.—(*Lord Kenyon.*)

*THE EARL OF WEMYSS: As I was told from the Treasury Bench that my arguments applied to this Bill, it is not necessary that I should repeat them. I simply beg to move my Motion as an Amendment to the Second Reading of this Bill.

*LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: I think it desirable that the House should be absolutely, and without any doubt, in possession of the precise issue which is raised by this Bill. The idea of the Bill is to amend and simplify the procedure under the Borough Funds Act, 1872. Briefly, this Bill frees Borough Councils from every restriction as to opposition to a Bill, and it modifies and alters the procedure in the case of promoting a Bill. The noble Lord opposite (Lord Avebury) objects to this Bill on the ground, I understand, that it diminishes the power of owners. I think it would be convenient if I were to describe shortly the precise procedure under the Act of 1872. Under that Act Borough Councils are empowered to employ rates in either promoting or opposing any private Bill in Parliament, but the exercise of the power is subject to certain restrictions. One of those restrictions is that the consent of the owners and ratepayers to the promotion of the Bill should be obtained. For the purpose of testing the feeling of the ratepayers a meeting has to be called, and upon a vote taken for or against the promotion of the Bill the matter may be settled, provided no ratepayer demands a poll. Under that Act any single ratepayer may demand a poll of the whole constituency, and put the area to the expense involved thereby, and it is a very considerable expense in some large areas. For instance, in the city of Westminster there are some 18,000 inhabited houses, the owner or occupier of every one of which would have to have the opportunity of voting. The object of this Bill is to repeal the provisions of the Act of 1872, so far as opposition to a Bill is concerned, so that the council of either a borough or urban district may oppose a Bill without obtaining the consent of the ratepayers. I understand from the previous discussion that neither the noble Earl on the cross benches nor the noble Lord opposite demurs to power being given to local authorities to oppose Bills.

*THE EARL OF WEMYSS: Yes, pending the inquiry.

*LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: I understood that their arguments were directed against the promotion of Bills and not against the opposition to Bills. It is quite clear that you cannot get any power for municipal trading by opposing a Bill. That, I think, must be obvious to anybody, and therefore the real question before us is whether the restrictions proposed to be substituted in this Bill for the restrictions now on the Statute-book are, or are not, improvements and sufficient for the purpose. There is no other issue. The question of municipal trading does not come into it, because now every Borough Council and Urban District Council can promote a Bill under certain restrictions. The only question is whether the restrictions which are now proposed to be substituted in this Bill are sufficient and satisfactory for the purpose. What is proposed now is that the resolution of the local authority to promote a Bill must be passed after ten days notice by advertisement in a local paper, and it must be confirmed by another resolution passed in like manner not less than fourteen days after the deposit of the Bill. The Local Government Board, to whom the powers of the Home Office are transferred, have also the power of veto. The position of matters at present is this, that when a proposal to promote a Bill is made by the local authority, notice has to be given by placards and advertisements of the proposed Bill. A public meeting of the parochial electors has to be called to consider the question, and the Bill has to be explained to them. The decision of the meeting, in favour o or against the promotion of the Bill, or any parts or clauses thereof, must be obtained, but any single elector can now insist upon a poll being taken. I think this is an undue power to put into the hands of any one man. As I indicated a few minutes ago, in the Borough of Westminster there are 18,000 inhabited houses, and it may be fairly said that some 30,000 persons could vote if a poll were taken in that borough. It is, therefore, not only a very cumbrous, but an exceedingly expensive matter if any one person takes exception. The idea of the present Bill is to substitute for the one man who may put the borough to that expense a proportion of the electorate. It is proposed that one-twentieth of their number may require a poll, or one hundred electors, whichever is the larger number. I do not think there is anything revolutionary in this Bill, and perhaps both the noble Lords who have spoken, and even the House itself, will be surprised when they are told that a Bill in almost identical terms passed this House in 1898. I do not know why it never went further, but on this occasion the Bill comes up to the House with the authority of the other House, and having, as I have said, been passed by this House five years ago. It is not, as the noble Earl seems to suggest, adapted from the Bill of a private Member. It was introduced as a Government Bill at the beginning of the session, and, after escaping all the perils to which Government Bills are exposed, it comes up here with the practical unanimity of the other House. I am not going to pretend that it is a matter of absolutely first-rate importance, but I do think it a matter of great convenience that these onerous restrictions should be removed. I am authorised by my colleague, the President of the Local Government Board, to say that he sincerely hopes the Bill may become law. There is nothing in the slightest degree dangerous in it, and I do not see why it should wait for the result of this inquiry. I do not think that any one can allege that the safeguards which we propose to substitute for those now on the Statute-book are not sufficient, and I sincerely hope the House will consent to pass the Bill.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (The Earl of HALSBURY): I think it right that I should call attention to the fact that the Amendment of the noble Earl has been already negatived by this House, and it would not be in order to move it again. The Amendment applied both to the County Councils Bill and to this Bill, and as it has been negatived it is out of order on this Bill.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: On that point I am not quite certain that I agree with the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack. The Amendment could not have been in order as applying to both Bills, because the second Bill was not then before the House. It is impossible, surely, to move a Resolution with regard to a Bill not before the House, and therefore I think the noble Earl's Amendment ought to have been declared out of order when he moved it to the first Bill.

*LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: As to the point of order which has been raised, surely it is hardly worth while making a difficulty about it, because if any noble Lord wishes to get rid of the Bill he has only to move that it be read a second time this day six months.

*LORD AVEBURY: My Lords, I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time this day six months. I shall not take up the time of your Lordships by repeating the arguments so forcibly stated by the noble Earl below me as to the undesirability of dealing with the law on this subject just at a time when the whole question is going to be inquired into. The noble Lord who moved the Second Reading told the House frankly that the Bill does introduce considerable alterations, and it cannot be denied that it diminishes the safeguards which have hitherto existed. It does seem to me that the present moment, when we are going to inquire into the whole subject, is most inopportune for such a great alteration in the law. My noble friend stated that the Bill came to us with all the authority of the other House of Parliament, but, unless I am mistaken, no statement was ever made upon it, and there was no discussion in the other House. Why should the ratepayers be deprived of the power which is taken away by this Bill? A practical illustration of the importance of the safeguard which this Bill proposes to abandon has been afforded within the year. The Hove Corporation proposed a system of tramways within and without the area of the borough at a capital outlay of £103,700. As the local authorities to the west of Hove did not approve, and would not co-operate, the scheme was abandoned for one within the boundaries of the town only, at an estimated cost of £80,500. A meeting of owners and ratepayers was accordingly held under the Borough Funds Act, 1872, on 16th December, 1902. When the Resolution authorising the promotion of the Bill of the Hove Corporation—

> "For constructing and working tramways, erecting electric generating stations, acquiring existing tramways, providing for the expense and use of conduits for telephones and other wires, providing and running motors, omnibuses, etc."

was put to the meeting, the Mayor, who presided, declared it carried by a large majority. A poll was demanded, and the result was announced on 17th January, 1903, as follows: Votes for the Bill, 3,111; votes against the Bill, 4,185; majority against, 1,074.

How serious the position is regarded by those most interested in the trade and commerce of the country has recently been shown by the fact that a memorial has been presented to the Bank of England, most influentially signed, calling attention to the alarming growth of municipal indebtedness. How have we been met by the supporters of municipal trading? Not by argument, but by abuse and misrepresentation. Even Lord Welby, from whom we should have hoped for better things, went out of his way to make a personal attack on me. Lord Welby said:

> "Lord Avebury and his friends, have I think, been waiting for a huge failure on the part of some local authority to raise a new loan, but they have waited in vain, and I think always will wait in vain. No doubt they would have liked to see the last London County Council loan of five million a failure. . . . . . Such an ignorant and useless way of talking can have no real effect."

My noble friend has no right to make any such assumption. He entirely mistakes our position. We should be very sorry that any loan issued by the

London County Council should be a fiasco. As ratepayers it is our interest that municipalities should be able to borrow at as cheap a rate as possible. If they could get the money for nothing so much the better. Might I not good humouredly apply to Lord Welby his own words,

> "Such an ignorant and useless way of talking can have no real effect."

But municipalities have most important duties to fulfil—duties sufficient to tax all their energies. We wish them to have time to think out the problems of municipal government. This Bill, on the contrary, will encourage and facilitate the undertaking of outside enterprises, which will overtax their energies, and inevitably tend to higher rates. I hope, therefore, that your Lordships will throw out the Bill. The great increase in the rates which has taken place in late years is partly due to the fact that so many have votes who do not pay any rates, at any rate directly. They do not, therefore, feel the need for economy. By depriving owners of any voice, the Bill will aggravate the evil, and it will also commit a great injustice. It will not be denied that anyone renting or buying a property takes the rates into consideration. Surely the owners are entitled to some voice in the expenditure. No doubt the present state of the law is unsatisfactory and requires amendment, but the present Bill goes in the wrong direction. It takes away from owners even the slight power they now have of resisting unwise expenditure, and will tend, therefore, still further to increase the heavy burden of the rates.

*LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: This Bill does not deprive owners of any rights they now possess as owners.

*LORD AVEBURY: Will they be able to vote as they do now? I was informed that if the Bill passed, the owners' vote would be taken away.

*LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: The point is a technical one, but my information is to this effect, that the alteration from owner to parochial elector was made by the Local Government Act of 1894, and that all we are doing is to alter the proportion of parochial electors who may demand a poll. The owners' right was taken away in 1894.

*LORD AVEBURY: I can only say that I am advised differently. The point is not merely technical, but practical. At present, owners have the power to vote, and I believe they did so in the Hove case. At any rate, if it does take away any power from owners, I think we may take it that in Committee that will not be pressed. But whether it takes away the owners' vote or not, it does diminish the power of the ratepayers to control the local authorities.

Amendment moved—

> "To leave out the word 'now' in order to add at the end of the Motion 'this day six months.'"—(*Lord Avebury.*)

*LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: I made a statement on a question of fact a few minutes ago. I may possibly have misled the noble Lord and the House, and I desire to put myself right at once. I stated correctly that the Act of 1894 substituted the parochial electors as the people who would have to vote in the event of a poll being demanded, but, at the present time, in addition to these parochial electors, the owners may vote for that particular purpose if each owner makes a claim, but he has to make a claim within a certain limited number of days on the particular vote which is to be given. He is not on the register, and although he has, in the abstract, the power to make a claim and to vote, it is hedged about with such difficulties that it is very rarely exercised. It is the fact, however, that the noble Lord was correct to the extent that the Bill will abolish the right of the owner to claim to exercise his vote.

*LORD AVEBURY: The question is surely one of much importance. I venture to think that the right of the owner to claim is an important one, and, instead of being restricted, it should be facilitated, because he is the person in many cases on whom the burden of the rates ultimately falls.

On question, "Whether the word proposed to be left out shall stand part of the Motion."

Their Lordships divided:—Contents, 57; Not-contents, 17.

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Canterbury, L. Abp.
Halsbury, E. (*L. Chancellor.*)
Devonshire, D. (*L. President.*)
Norfolk, D. (*E. Marshal.*)

Grafton, D.
Manchester, D.

Bath, M.
Lansdowne, M.
Ripon, M.
Zetland, M.

Belmore, E.
Chesterfield, E.
Coventry, E.
Hardwicke, E.
Jersey, E.
Lauderdale, E.
Onslow, E.
Portsmouth, E.

Romney, E.
Spencer, E.
Stanhope, E.
Vane, E. (*M. Londonderry.*)
Waldegrave, E. [*Teller.*[

Churchill, V. [*Teller.*]
Gordon, V. (*E. Aberdeen.*)
Goschen, V.
Powerscourt, V.
Sidmouth, V.

Abinger, L.
Addington, L.
Ashcombe, L.
Balfour, L.
Barnard, L.
Belper, L.
Boyle, L. (*E. Cork and Orrery.*)
Brassey, L.
Brougham and Vaux, L.

Burghclere, L.
Clanwilliam, L(*E. Clanwilliam*
Colchester, L.
Congleton, L.
Glanusk, L.
Glenesk, L.
Hawkesbury, L.
Kelvin, L.
Kenyon, L.
Killanin, L.
Lawrence, L.
Leigh, L.
Muncaster, L.
Penrhyn, L.
Reay, L.
Ribblesdale, L.
Robertson, L.
Sandhurst, L.
Shute, L. (*V. Barrington.*)
Wolverton, L.

NOT-CONTENTS.

Camperdown, E. [*Teller.*]
Cawdor, E.
Leven and Melville, E.
Rosslyn, E.

Hutchinson, V(*E Donoughmore*

Avebury, L. [*Teller.*]
Calthorpe, L.
Chelmsford L.
Crawshaw, L.
de Ros, L.
Heneage, L.

Iveagh, L.
Newton, L.
Sherborne, L.
Sinclair, L.
Stalbridge, L.
Wemyss, L. (*E. Wemyss.*)

Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next.

THE NEW FISHERIES BOARD.

LORD HENEAGE: My Lords, I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, as the Bill for the creation of a Fisheries Board has been prepared, His Majesty's Government will consider the desirability of introducing that measure in the House of Lords as early as possible, in view of its urgent necessity and the unavoidable delay which has already occurred. I would like to call the attention of my noble friend, whom I venture to congratulate on his appointment, to the circumstances under which this Question was put down. Last October there was a very large Sea Fisheries Conference held at Grimsby. A resolution was passed urging on the Government the necessity of establishing a Fisheries Department with increased status, and I was asked to arrange for a deputation to the Prime Minister during the present session for the discussion of this and several other questions. While negotiations were proceeding as to the date for the deputation, it became known that it had been decided by the Government to create a Fisheries Board, and the Prime Minister wrote to me asking whether I did not think it would be more convenient if the deputation was put off during the transfer of the duties of the Fisheries Department from the Board of Trade to the new Board. I thought the suggestion a very fair one, and agreed to it, but it was, of course, on the understanding that the Bill was to be proceeded with at once, and that the deputation on the various subjects discussed at the conference would be received at an early date after Easter. We all know that the delay was unavoidable owing to the sad and regrettable death of Mr. Hanbury, but at the moment of his death he had made himself master of most of the questions with regard to the fishery trade, and had also prepared a Bill which, from the information I had, was to have been introduced directly after Easter. The position of the sea fisheries has been a very inconvenient one during the last four or five months. We are at present in the position of being in no man's land. Seeing that the House of Commons is so full of business, I am very anxious that this Bill should be introduced in this House as early as possible in view of its urgent necessity.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (The EARL OF ONSLOW): My Lords, first of all I must express my gratitude to the noble Lord for the compliment he paid me. One of the first things that I found on taking charge of my Department was the draft of the Bill to which he has referred. It was necessary for me to give some little consideration to it, and to some extent to alter and remodel it, but I am glad to be able to inform the noble Lord that the Bill has now been prepared. I will lay it on the Table of the House to-night, and if it suits the convenience of your Lordships, and the noble Lord in particular, I propose to take the Second Reading on Monday next.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN (AMENDMENT) BILL [H.L.].

Amendments reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow.

UNION OF BENEFICES ACT, 1860, AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.].

Amendment reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next.

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY COUNCILS) BILL [H.L.].

Amendment reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next.

POLLING ARRANGEMENTS (PARLIAMENTARY BOROUGHS) BILL [H.L.].

Amendment reported (according to Order) and Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (TRANSFER OF POWERS) BILL.

Read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 97.)

Lord Heneage.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 6) BILL. (No. 98.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 8) BILL. (No. 99.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 11) BILL. (No. 100.)

NAVAL WORKS PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL. (No. 101.)

Read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners.

FORTH NAVIGATION ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL.

Read 1ª; to be printed, and (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899), deemed to have been read 2 (*The Lord Balfour*), and reported from the Committee. (No. 102.)

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to transfer to the Board of Agriculture powers and duties relating to the industry of fishing, and to amend the Board of Agriculture Act, 1889—Was presented by the Earl of Onslow; read 1ª, to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Monday next. (No. 103.)

House adjourned at Six o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 11*th June*, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS]. (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH.)

MR SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz. :—London and North Western Railway Bill [Lords]. Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

Beckingham Urban District Council Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Cleveland and Durham County Electric Power Bill [Lords]. Read the third time, and passed, with an Amendment.

Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway (Various Powers) Bill (King's Consent signified). Read the third time and passed.

Great Western Railway Bill (King's Consent and Prince of Wales' Consent signified) Read the third time, and passed.

Grindleford, Baslow, and Bakewell Railway Bill, Read the third time, and passed.

Hainault Forest Bill (King's Consent signified). Read the third time, and passed.

India Rubber, Gutta Percha, and Telegraph Works Company Bill [Lords]. Read the third time, and passed with Amendments.

London County Council (Money) Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Milford Docks Bill [Lords]. Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Neath, Pontardawe, and Brynaman Railway Bill, Read the third time, and passed.

North Eastern Railway Bill (King's Consent signified). Read the third time, and passed.

Romford and District Tramways Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

South Wales Mineral Railway Bill [Lords]. Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Bill [Lords]; Wellington (Salop) Gas Bill [Lords]. Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Wood Green Urban District Council Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Bristol, London, and Southern Counties Railway Bill. Reported [Preamble not proved]; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Electric Lighting (London) Bill [Lords]. Ordered, That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Electric Lighting (London) Bill [Lords] with respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bills.—(*Mr. Elliot.*)

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to Amendments to Plymouth and Stonehouse Gas Bill [Lords], without Amendment.

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PETITIONS.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.

Petition from Beckenham, against; to lie upon the Table.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT, 1882, AND ELECTRIC LIGHTING (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1890.

Petition from Haddington, for alteration of law; to lie upon the Table.

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Newport (Fife), against; to lie upon the Table.

HERITABLE PROPERTY (SCOTLAND) (REGISTRATION OF WRITS).

Petition from Haddington, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL.

Petitions against: from West Bromwich; Grimsby; and Glasgow; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.

Petitions against: from Glasgow; Grimsby; and Eccles; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petitions for alteration: from Glenbuck; Letham; Glasgow; and St. Ternan; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Haddington, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Camberwell; and School Board for London; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Haddington against; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions for alteration: from Haddington; and Scottish Home Timber Merchants' Association; to lie upon the Table.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL

Petition from Beckenham, against; to lie upon the Table.

PARISH COUNCILS AND BURIAL AUTHORITIES (SCOTLAND) (REPAYMENT OF LOANS).

Petition from Haddington, for alteration of law; to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petitions against (praying to be heard by Counsel): From General Shipowners Society, London; Council of the Metropolitan Borough of Bermondsey; Commercial Gas Company; Timber Trade Federation of the United Kingdom (London Section) and others; London Chamber of Commerce; Pilots on the River Thames; Master Lightermen and Barge-owners Wharfingers. Coal Merchants, and Granary Keepers on the River Thames; Midland Railway Company; London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway Company; Hertfordshire County Council; Gas Light and Coke Company; Berkshire County Council; Holders of Debenture Stock of the Surrey Commercial Dock Company; Corporation of London; Surrey Commercial Dock Company; Poplar Borough Council; London Trades Council; London Grain Elevator Company, Limited; Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of the City of Rochester; and Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the County Borough of West Ham; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill.

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Ynysybwl; Dundee; and Saltash; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HOUSES (HOURS OF CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Glasgow, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

Petition from Accrington, for alteration of law; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES (IRELAND).

Return [presented 10th June] to be printed. [No. 198.]

LUNATIC ASYLUMS (IRELAND).

Return [presented 10th June] to be printed. [No. 199.]

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND).

Copy of Twenty-first Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland, being for the year 1902. Part III. Scientific Investigations [by Command]; to lie upon the Table

EAST INDIA (CORONATION OF HIS MAJESTY).

Copy presented, of Account of the Durbar held at Delhi on the 1st January, 1903, in celebration of the Coronation of His Majesty King Edward VII. [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION (APPLICATION OF FUNDS BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES).

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 28th July, 1902—*Sir John Gorst*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 200.]

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1884.

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 8th June, 1903, declaring that

Alfred Robinson, Artificer, Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield, was appointed without a Civil Service Certificate, through inadvertence on the part of the Head of his Department [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

SINKING FUNDS.

Account presented, of the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt, showing the amount received and applied in the year ended 31st March, 1903, in respect of the Old and New Sinking Funds [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 201.]

ARKLOW HARBOUR.

Copy presented, of Report of the Arklow Harbour Commissioners and Statement of Accounts for 1902 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 1) BILL [LORDS].

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 8th June—*Mr. Bonar Law*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 202.]

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2) BILL.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 8th June—*Mr. Bonar Law*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 203.]

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 3) BILL.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 8th June—*Mr. Bonar Law*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 204.]

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 4) BILL.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 8th June—*Mr. Bonar Law*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No 205.]

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 5) BILL.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 8th June—*Mr. Bonar Law*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 206.]

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 6) BILL.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 8th June—*Mr. Bonar Law*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 207.]

HARWICH HARBOUR.

Copy presented, of Abstract of the Accounts of the Receipts and Expenditure of the Harwich Harbour Conservancy Board from the time of their incorporation down to and inclusive of the 31st March, 1903, etc. [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 208.]

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2991 to 2993 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (MISCELLANEOUS SERIES).

Copy presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Miscellaneous Series, No. 592 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANKS, 1902.

Returns ordered, "(1) from each Savings Bank in England and Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and the Channel Islands, containing, in columns, the names of the officers, their respective salaries, and other allowances, if any; the amount of security each gives; the annual expenses of management, inclusive of all payments and salaries, for the year ended the 20th day of November, 1902; the rate per centum per annum on the capital of the Bank for the expenses of management; the rate of interest paid to Depositors on the various amounts of deposit, and the average rate of interest on all accounts; the number of accounts remaining open; the total amount owing to Depositors; the total amount invested with the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt; the balance in the hands of the Treasurer at the 20th day of November, 1902; the total amount of the separate Surplus Fund on the 20th day of November, 1902; other assets, including estimated value of Bank premises, furniture, &c.; the total assets; the total amount of Government Stock standing to the credit of Depositors; the number and amount of annuities granted; and the average cost of each transaction; also the year in which business commenced in each Bank, and the name of the day or days, and the number of hours in the week, on which the Banks are open for the deposit and withdrawal of moneys; including in such Return a list of all such Savings Banks as, under the provisions of the Act 26 Vic. c. 14, or otherwise, have been closed and have transferred their funds, or any part thereof, to the Post Office Savings Banks; showing, in each case, the number of such Banks, as well as the number and amount of Depositors' accounts so transferred, and the amount of compensation, if any, made to all or any of the Officers of such Banks respectively; and showing also the years in which such Banks were respectively opened and closed, and the number and amount of their Depositors' balances, and the number of days and hours in each week on which the same Banks were open for public business at the close of the year next preceding the date of such closing; distinguishing the same, as in the Return, for each separate county, as well as collectively, for England and Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and the Channel Islands, and for the United Kingdom: and (2) for the year ending the 20th day of November, 1902, showing the total number of Depositors in Trustee Savings Banks; the total number of deposits; the average amount of each deposit account; the average sums paid in and drawn out; the total number of persons who have deposited in single sums the entire amount allowed to be deposited during the year (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 267, of Session 1902)."—(*Mr. Mount.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Land Revenue of India.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary of State for India, in view of the announcement that the Government of India have recently laid down principles which will secure liberal treatment to landowners in future settlements of the land revenue, can he state approximately for each province what percentage the land revenue will bear to the gross produce.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) The Resolution of the Government of India in which these liberal principles are laid down explains in paragraph 16 why it is neither possible nor equitable to fix the demand of the State at a definite share of the gross produce of the soil. In paragraph 17 an estimate is given of the proportion of the gross produce taken by the present assessments in the several provinces, and it is there stated that the average rate, so far from showing an inclination to enhancement, is everywhere on the downward scale.

MR. WEIR: To ask the Secretary of State for India, having regard to the fact that the additional land revenue receipts derived through the irrigation of State canals in the united Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Punjab and North West Frontier Province, Madras, and Bombay, are estimated to produce £821,900, will he state how much of this sum is derived from each of the four Provinces.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) United Provinces, £89,100; Punjab, £91,300; North-West Frontier Province, £3,000; Madras, £527,000; Bombay, £111,500; Total, £821,900.

Intercommunication between Passengers and Guards on Indian Railways.

MR. WEIR: To ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is yet able to say when the Government of India will adopt a system of inter-communication between passengers and guards on Indian railways.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) I have nothing to add to the answer which I gave to the hon. Member on this subject on the 26th of February last.† But the matter is receiving, and will continue to receive, the attention of the Government of India and of the Indian Railway Companies.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxviii., 912.

Inoculation against Plague in India.

MR. WEIR: To ask the Secretary of State for India if he will state the number of persons in each Province of India who have been inoculated with plague serum since this system was introduced; and will he say how many of these persons have since died of plague.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) The Returns, so far as they are available, are given in the subjoined statement:—

	Number of Persons inoculated.	Number of Persons inoculated who have since died of plague
Madras - -	21,404	Not known
Bengal - - -	34,332	31
United Provinces -	8,538	26
Punjab - - -	480,737	1,158
Central Provinces	10,649	34
Coorg - - -	3	0
Berar - - -	2,407	9
Bombay - -	599,857	1,482

Indian State Railways—Native Officials.

MR. WEIR: To ask the Secretary of State for India if he will state whether there is any rule, and, if so, what, preventing natives of India being given access to higher appointments on Indian railways.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) There is no such rule. In the Public Works Code (vol. 4, cap. 8, paragraph 37) it is laid down that "Promotions from class to class will be made on the occurrence of vacancies in the sanctioned cadre, and they will be made wholly by selection of the fittest persons."

Limitation of Army Order 9 of January, 1903.

MR. JOHN HUTTON (Yorkshire, Richmond): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether he will explain why the Indian Government recommended that the Army Order, No. 9, of January, 1903, should be limited to troops engaged in the operations previous to 3rd March, 1893; and whether they will extend the date so as to include the Sima Relief Column under Captain Davies, D.S.O., which started from Bhamo in April, 1893, and which was the last expedition that season; and whether he can explain why the Army Order, No. 9, of January. 1903, conferring medals upon troops engaged in India in 1893 has been so long delayed.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) The Government of India, with all the facts before them, fixed the 3rd March, 1893, as the date on which active operations in the Kachin Hills ceased. The column under Captain Davies, D.S.O., which left Bhamo for Sima on 12th April, 1903, met with no opposition. The delay in the grant of the medal was due to the fact that, at first, the operations in the Kachin Hills in 1892–3 were not considered to be of sufficient military importance to justify the grant of a medal.

Postal Services Committee—Names of Members.

MR. BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): To ask the Postmaster-General if he is now prepared to give the names of the gentlemen to serve on the promised Committee to investigate the grievances of the Post Office employees; and whether he can state the terms of reference to the Committee.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) I am not yet in a position to make any further statement on this matter.

London-Brighton Telephone—Interruptions.

MR. LODER (Brighton): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he can give any explanation of the condition of the trunk telephone lines between London and Brighton, and of the constant interruptions which occur.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) The trunk lines between London and Brighton are in good condition and work very satisfactorily as a rule. Three new lines were brought into use in November last, and there is little delay in obtaining communication with London. On three days recently the time occupied in trunk calls has exceeded thirty minutes owing to the temporary interruption of some of the lines. These interruptions were chiefly due to alterations of wires in progress on the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway.

Corn Duty—Rebate to Millers.

MR. PHILIP FOSTER (Warwickshire, Stratford-upon-Avon): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, seeing that it is proposed to allow millers a rebate on duty paid corn which may be in stock on 30th June, but not to allow to those who have not stock sufficient to produce a rebate of £25, he will, in the interest of small millers, reduce this amount to one of £10.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) No, Sir; I cannot go beyond the limit which has been already announced and is laid down in the Finance Bill.

Swine Fever in Essex.

MR. ROUND (Essex, Harwich): To ask the hon. Member for Huntingdonshire, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he will state to what extent swine fever now exists within the county of Essex; and whether he can see his way to the removal of the restrictions now in force.

(*Answered by Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes.*) There has been a distinct improvement in the position of Essex in regard to swine fever since the restrictions to which my right hon. friend refers were imposed in December last. In that month there were twenty-four outbreaks of the disease, whereas last month the number was eight. In these circumstances the Board have felt justified in withdrawing the restrictions as from the 12th instant. I may add that the local authority have recently decided to adopt regulations which will, we believe, if properly enforced, very much reduce the risk of the re-introduction of the disease into the county.

Walmer Barracks—Discharge of Sewage.

MR. HARWOOD (Bolton): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, whether, seeing that the sewage from the marine barracks and hospital at Walmer is discharged crude into the sea immediately opposite the town, he will explain why the Admiralty has declined to join the authorities of the town in establishing a system of treatment for this sewage.

(*Answered by Mr. Pretyman.*) The Admiralty have not declined to join the local authorities in establishing an improved sewage system. They have for a long time past been urging them to establish such a system.

Cost of Registration of Births, Deaths, etc., in Ireland.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork Co., N.E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state the total cost of the registration of births, deaths, and marriages in Ireland, and the relative proportion of such cost paid out of the rates levied for relief of the poor and from Imperial sources.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The amount paid out of voted moneys on this service during the year ended 31st March, 1902, was £13,341. The amount paid out of local rates in the same period, by way of fees to registrars of births, deaths, and marriages, was £9,303.

Sale of the Massarene and Dean's Estate.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that, in April, 1891, the Judge of the Land Court in Ireland issued an absolute order for the sale of the Massarene and Dean's estate, situated in the counties of Limerick and Tipperary; and that, in February, 1897, the estate being still unsold, the matter was brought before Mr. Justice Ross for delay, and also in December, 1899, May, 1900, and July, 1902, for the same purpose, he can state upon what grounds the sale of this estate has been deferred from April, 1891; when will it be finally disposed of; and what is the loss to the incumbrancers by reason of the delay in the proceedings.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The applications made on the dates mentioned in respect to the delay in the proceedings for the sale of this estate were, on each occasion, the subject of judicial decision. I am informed that the entire property, with the exception of some holdings to which the Land Purchase Acts do not apply, has now been sold. It is not possible to form an estimate of the loss, if any, caused to the incumbrancers by reason of the delay in completing the sales.

Volunteer Ammunition Allowance.

MR. FREDERICK WILSON (Norfolk, Mid.): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will explain why the number of rounds of ammunition allowed to each rifle volunteer for match shooting and private practice at the range has been reduced to ten; and whether he will reconsider this decision.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) A regulation has recently been promulgated which limits the expenditure on prize competitions and matches to ten rounds per efficient, in consequence of the desire of the military authorities that the ammunition available for private practice should be employed in improving the general musketry efficiency of the corps, rather than that it should be utilised for match shooting by a few experienced shots.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Army Canteens.

GENERAL LAURIE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state if it has been decided to establish the canteens in the Army at home and abroad on the tenant system, or on what is known as the regimental system, and, if the latter, whether he has considered the advisability of imposing the additional duties of stock purchasing and book keeping on officers whose principal duty is to train their men as soldiers; or whether, in view of the responsibilities connected with such a system of regimental training, he would recommend the appointment of an additional officer, selected on account of his qualifications for this special purpose, and who should have no part in the military training of the soldier.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, Westhoughton): General Officers commanding Army Corps at home and districts at home and abroad have recently been informed that in future they will decide the particular system of management to be adopted in the regimental institute and canteen of each unit in their command, subject to certain general principles to be laid down by the Commander-in-Chief. No serving soldier will be allowed to be employed. No alteration in establishment such as that suggested is contemplated.

GENERAL LAURIE: Will the commanding officers of the several units have any voice in this matter?

LORD STANLEY: I do not think there is the slightest doubt that the General Officer Commanding will consult the commanding officers of units

Officers' Uniforms.

GENERAL LAURIE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state how many changes have been made in the uniform of the officers of the Army since 1st October, 1899, and give particulars of these changes; whether these changes were made to enable the officers to discharge their duties more efficiently, or whether the object has been to reduce the cost to the officers of providing and maintaining these uniforms; and whether he can state that the object has been attained.

LORD STANLEY: The only material changes in officers' dress since October, 1899, were those promulgated by Army Orders 39 and 40 of 1902, by which a service dress, frock coat, and great coat were introduced; gold lace was removed from trousers, also mess jackets, and a great reduction in lace ornamentation of tunics was made. These changes have not existed sufficiently long for officers now serving to feel the benefit, but, eventually the changes referred to must of necessity lessen officers' expenses in the matter of uniform. I entirely concur with my hon. and gallant friend in thinking that all such changes should be reduced to a minimum.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.): Is it not the fact that within the last six weeks a new great coat was ordered for officers and withdrawn less than three weeks afterwards?

LORD STANLEY: I cannot say. That is not a matter which would be brought before me. But I know that for every change proposed by the War Office there are fifty asked for by the officers themselves.

Somaliland Operations—Reported Capture of British Officers.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has any reason to believe that certain British officers are in the hands of the Somali Mullah; and whether preparations are being made for the active resumption of hostilities in that country.

LORD STANLEY: The War Office has received no official information to the effect that certain British officers are prisoners in the hands of the Mullah. As regards future movements it has been necessary to give considerable orders for camels to replace wastage, and to enable General Manning's force to carry out the concentration on Bohotle.

Military Railway at Chatham.

MR. MANSFIELD (Lincolnshire, Spalding): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, will he state why the construction of the military railway between Chatham Barracks and Tor Darland has ceased; the cost of the portion already constructed, and the cost when the whole of the work is completed; and, further, at what dates he anticipates the work will be resumed and finished.

LORD STANLEY: The construction of the railway has been suspended, as the General Officer Commanding does not consider its completion necessary for the training of the school of military engineering, which formed part of the reasons for the work in question. The cost of the portion already constructed is about £2,000. The total estimated cost of the line is £11,500.

New Zealand Meat Industry.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been drawn to the proposal of the New Zealand Government to open shops in Great Britain for the sale of meat at cost price; and whether, if this proposal is carried out, he contemplates the imposition of a countervailing duty on New Zealand meat.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): The answer to both questions is in the negative.

British Indian Subjects in the Transvaal.

SIR MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE (Bethnal Green, N. E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he has received the Reports he had undertaken to call for from the local authorities relating to the treatment of certain British-Indian subjects in the Transvaal, and also with regard to the murder of a Mahomedan fruit seller at Durban in February last, and the trial of a person named Kennedy in connection with the death of a labourer at Ladysmith in March last, and, if so, will he state the contents of the Reports and place the Papers upon the Table of the House.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I have not yet received the Reports referred to, but they were asked for by despatch on 1st May.

SIR MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE: When does the right hon. Gentleman expect to hear from Lord Milner?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Roughly speaking, it takes three weeks to send by mail, and I must allow some time for making inquiries.

SIR MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the regulations laid down by the Boer Government are being enforced by the present Government. Will he send orders for the suspension of the regulations?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: That is not the case. The law is not being enforced in all the vigour with which it was carried into effect by the Boers, and considerable modifications have been made.

SIR. MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE: I will furnish the right hon. Gentleman with information to the effect I have stated.

British Guiana—Protective Duty on Matches.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether there is a protective duty on matches entering the Colony of British Guiana; and if so, whether the duty applies to matches made in the United Kingdom; and whether there is more than one match factory in British Guiana.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The answer to the first two questions is in the affirmative. As regards the third there is no recent information, but I am not aware that there is more than one such factory.

Indentured Coolie Labour in Natal.

SIR MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he has received from the Government of India any statement in connection with the mission of delegates sent from Natal to settle the conditions regarding indentured Coolie labour; whether any settlement has been arrived at on the point of allowing the labourers to remain in the colony after the expiry of their indentures; and whether he will lay all Papers relating to the conference upon the Table of the House.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): I have received the proposals of the Government of India, and they are under consideration; but I cannot at present say whether it will be possible to lay the Papers on the Table, as the correspondence is still incomplete.

Navigation of the Congo.

LORD EDMUND FITZMAURICE (Wiltshire, Cricklade): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if it is proposed to bring to the notice of the signatories of the Berlin Act of 1884–5 the desirability of now constituting the River Commission for the control of the navigation of the Congo, which it was contemplated should be formed under the provisions of that Act.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord CRANBORNE, Rochester): No complaints have reached His Majesty's Government as to any difficulties in connection with the navigation of the Congo; there would seem, therefore, to be no good reason for raising the question of the desirability of constituting the River Commission alluded to by the noble Lord.

Austro-Hungary—Proposed Increased Tariff on British Machinery.

MR. SEYMOUR ORMSBY-GORE (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what representations have been made by His Majesty's Government to the Austro-Hungarian Government with regard to the proposed increased duties to be levied by those countries on British manufactured machinery.

LORD CRANBORNE: No representations have been made on the subject. I understand that the proposed new Austro-Hungarian tariff is not likely to be disposed of by the Austrian and Hungarian Parliaments before September at the earliest. The proposed tariff is to form one of the subjects for consideration at a meeting of the Commercial Intelligence Committee of the Board of Trade next week.

The Revolution in Servia.

MR. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I wish to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs a question, of which I have given him private notice, whether he is able to communicate any information to the House with regard to the revolution which has broken out in Servia; whether it is the fact that both the dynasty and the Ministry of Servia have been changed by the method of assassination: and whether the safety of British subjects in Belgrade is assured.

LORD CRANBORNE: We are officially informed that King Alexander and Queen Draga were assassinated last night. A new Government has been formed under M. Avakumovics, a former Prime Minister. The constitution of the Parliament of 1901, recently abolished by King Alexander, has been restored, and the National Assembly, dissolved in March last, has been summoned to meet at once. That is all the information I have to communicate officially to the House.

LORD EDMUND FITZMAURICE: Has the noble Lord any information as to whether Ministers were also murdered?

LORD CRANBORNE: I am aware that the statement is published in the Press, and I have no reason to doubt its truth.

MR. STEVENSON: Is there any information as to the safety of British subjects at Belgrade?

LORD CRANBORNE: We have no information that there is any danger to them there.

Income from British Investments Abroad.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state the amount of income derived by inhabitants of the United Kingdom from investments abroad, and the corresponding amounts ten years ago and twenty years ago.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): It is not possible to state definitely what is the income derived from investments abroad. The following figures represent the income so derived, so far as it can be identified in the Statistics of the Income Tax, but such figures must not be regarded as representing the whole of the profits derived from British capital invested abroad. 1881–82, £30,600,000; 1891–92, £54,700,000; 1901–02, £62,600,000.

Flour Rebate.

MR. CHARLES DOUGLAS (Lanarkshire, N.W.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer at what rate it is proposed to pay rebate on stocks of flour on 1st July.

MR. RITCHIE: The rates of repayment of duty on flour will be as follows:—On flour which remains in the same condition as when imported, at the rate of duty paid, viz., 5d. per cwt.; on flour manufactured in the United Kingdom from foreign grain, the same rate as allowed when exported on drawback, viz., 3½d. per cwt.

MR. DELANY (Queen's Co., Ossory): Will all millers have the advantage of this?

MR. RITCHIE: It does not matter in whose hands the corn is so long as the duty comes to £25. We cannot go below that.

MR. DELANY: Why confine it to that?

MR. RITCHIE: In this particular case we are making a very considerable concession, and a very important one. It is quite impossible to go down to the lowest sums as the hon. Gentleman desires, because it would enormously increase the difficulty of the work.

Metropolitan Traffic — Accidents with Covered Vehicles.

SIR THOMAS DEWAR (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state the number of accidents caused by covered vehicles in the streets of the Metropolis during the year 1902 which have resulted in personal injuries; and will he say how many of such accidents have proved fatal.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. AKERS DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): In the year 1902 1,203 persons were injured by covered vehicles in the streets of London—not including the City—and in forty-two cases the injuries proved fatal.

Covered Vehicles in London—Proposed By-law.

SIR THOMAS DEWAR: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home

Department whether, in view of the number of accidents in the streets of the Metropolis caused by covered vehicles, he will consider the expediency of introducing legislation to require the proprietors of these vehicles to have them so constructed as to enable the drivers to see passing and following traffic.

*MR. AKERS DOUGLAS: The desirability of some remedy on this point has long been felt by all those concerned in the question of street traffic, and an attempt is now being made, as no doubt the hon. Member is aware, by the London County Council to deal with the matter by a by-law which they have submitted for my approval, and which is now under consideration. Objections have been taken to the by-law, and pending the result of this attempt it would be premature to enter on the consideration of legislation.

Vivisection—Use of Anæsthetics.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will state the number of dogs which have been subjected to experiments without anæsthetics at University College, London, from 1st April 1902 to 31st March 1903, by Dr. Bayliss and Professor E. H. Starling respectively.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY TO THE HOME OFFICE (Mr. COCHRANE, Ayrshire, N.): The answer is "None." Perhaps I may be permitted to correct an error in the answer which my right hon. friend gave the hon. Member on the 11th May as to the number of dogs used for experiments in the year 1902 at University College. It was stated that in seventy-seven cases experiments were conducted in the Department of Pathological Chemistry without anæsthetics. As a fact, in only four of these seventy-seven cases were anæsthetics not used.

Liverpool Emigrant Lodging Houses—Alleged Overcrowding.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been directed to a petition signed by 125 residents and ratepayers of Great George Square, Liverpool, complaining that out of thirty-four houses in the square no fewer than eleven are used as common emigrant lodging houses; is he aware that these houses are frequented by Italians, Russian Finns, Polish Jews, Gallicians, and Scandinavians, and are frequently so overcrowded as to constitute a source of danger to public health; and that one house was found on the 25th March last to contain eighty six persons in excess of the licensed number, and another sixty-one in excess; and, if so, will he consider the expediency of having these facts brought under the notice of the Commission on Alien Immigration and the Corporation of Liverpool, by whom these houses are let on lease.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. WALTER LONG, Bristol, S.): The hon. Member has given me an opportunity of seeing this petition and I have communicated with the Corporation on the subject. I am informed that there is no foundation for the suggestion that certain houses are frequently so overcrowded as to constitute a source of danger to the public health, but, as I stated in reply to a Question by the hon. Member on the 14th ultimo[†], proceedings were taken by the Corporation in respect of the overcrowding of two houses on the 25th March last. I see no advantage in bringing this matter before the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration. I understand that evidence has already been given before them by the Liverpool Medical Officer of Health. I am informed that in all cases where complaints are made by residents in the square, of emigrants' lodging houses being a nuisance, the Corporation make inquiry, and use every endeavour to ensure that the premises are used in accordance with the conditions of the lease or of any licence which may have been granted by the Corporation to any lessee, allowing the premises to be used otherwise than as a private dwelling house.

[†] See (4) *Debates*, cxxii, 689.

Precautions against Fires in Workhouses.

MR. MANSFIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, if he has received recently reports as to the means of extinguishing fire, the provision of fire escapes, and the general safety of the inmates in the case of fire in respect to the workhouses of the United Kingdom; and, if so, will he state their nature and what steps he is taking upon them; and, if not, will he take steps to instruct the inspectors to make such reports at the first opportunity.

MR. WALTER LONG: The Inspectors of my Department have received instructions when visiting a workhouse always to consider the arrangements for extinguishing fire and for the escape of the inmates, and to draw attention to any cases where the arrangements are insufficient. From time to time they report cases of this kind, and in any such case pressure is brought to bear on the Guardians with a view to steps being taken to secure the safety of the inmates.

"Passive Resistance" in Derbyshire.

MR. MANSFIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board has his attention been drawn to the fact that the order of the Wirksworth, Derbyshire, magistrates for distraint upon the goods of certain persons who have refused to pay the education rate for the county of Derby has not as yet been carried out, owing to the refusal of the local auctioneers to sell the goods; and, if so, will he state what steps he proposes to take in the matter; and whether he will now reconsider his decision not to advise local authorities to accept as much of a rate as is offered.

MR. WALTER LONG: I have seen some newspaper references to this subject. As regards the second part of the question I do not propose to take any action in the matter, and I do not think I can add anything to the answer which I gave the hon. Member last month.†

Education Rate Precepts.

MR. FULLER (Wiltshire, Westbury): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that the Wiltshire County Council has issued a precept to the Guardians for the payment of a rate in respect of elementary education payable as to the first instalment on 10th June, 1903, and as to the second instalment on 10th August 1903: and, if so, whether, seeing that the appointed day for the purposes of elementary education under The Education Act, 1902, is in Wiltshire 1st October, 1903, he will state whether the issue of such precept payable before the appointed day is within the powers of the Wiltshire County Council.

MR. WALTER LONG: I am not aware of the facts of the particular case referred to by the hon. Member; but, as regards the general question, I am advised that a County Council may legally issue a precept payable before the appointed day, for the purpose of meeting their expenses in bringing the Education Act, 1902, into operation.

Glycerinated Calf Lymph for Scotland.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, having regard to the fact that glycerinated calf lymph produced at the Board's laboratory is supplied free of charge to public vaccinators in England, will arrangements be made for parochial vaccinators in Scotland to be provided free of charge with sufficient lymph to meet their requirements. I beg also to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Secretary for Scotland will consider the expediency of obtaining from the Local Government Board laboratory in London the lymph required for the use of parochial vaccinators in Scotland.

*THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SCOTT DICKSON, Glasgow, Bridgton): In reply to the hon. Member's Questions I would refer him to the Lord Advocate's answer to his Question of 25th March, 1903,† in which the Lord Advocate said that parochial vaccinators receive free, on application, supplies of glycerinated calf lymph from the Local Government Board for Scotland. I would add that the lymph so supplied is obtained from the Local Government Board laboratory in London.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxii, 690.

† See (4) *Debates*, cxx, 178.

Undenominational Day Training Colleges—Grants.

DR. MACNAMARA (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether provision has been made in the Education Estimates for the year for increasing the grants on account of students in undenominational day training colleges, wherever those students are housed in hostels in accordance with the undertaking given during the debate on the Education Bill of last year; and, if so, when it is proposed by the Board of Education to issue regulations affecting the dispensation of these augmented grants.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Sir William Anson, Oxford University): The answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. The Board cannot at present state when they will be able to issue the regulations referred to.

Upkeep of Non-provided Schools.

DR. MACNAMARA: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether, under the Education Act of 1902, the whole of the managers of any non-provided school are jointly responsible for such expenditures on the upkeep of the fabric of the school as are not covered by the Local Education Authority; and, if so, whether any funds obtained in order to meet such portion of the upkeep of the fabric, either from Government Grants under the Act of 1897, from grant balances at the appointed day, or from moneys collected for the denominational share of the upkeep of the fabric, will also be under the control of the whole of the managers.

SIR WILLIAM ANSON: If the Question is intended to ascertain whether the whole of the managers of any non-provided school are personally liable for the expenditure referred to, the Board are advised that no manager is personally liable unless he chooses to make himself so by becoming a party to a contract. Money which comes into the hands of the managers for the upkeep of the fabric will be under the control of the whole of the managers.

Inspection of Weights and Measures—Ireland.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that fees are charged for the inspection of weights and measures in the rural districts of Ireland; and, if so, will he state what is done with these fees, or whether they are paid into any, and, if so, what public account.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): By Section 19 of the Weights and Measures Act, 1889, these fees are applied for the benefit of the Royal Irish Constabulary, upon whom, outside the metropolitan district, is placed by the Act of 1878 the duty of inspection. The fees are brought into a public account which is audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General.

MR. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.): But why should the police have the benefit of the fees?

MR. WYNDHAM: They do the work.

South Kerry Early Potato Industry

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what steps the Congested Districts Board intend to take in extending the early potato industry in South Kerry, in view of the fact that potatoes have been produced in the Cahirciveen district in the latter end of May, and considerably in advance of any other district in Ireland.

MR. WYNDHAM: The cultivation of early potatoes in this and other districts has been promoted by the Congested Districts Board and the Department of Agriculture. The experiment is being closely watched by both Departments. When the potatoes have been placed on the market, the two Departments will consider what further steps should be taken.

Irish Land Purchase Acts.

MR. MANSFIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is he aware that landed proprietors and tradesmen have purchased land under the Irish Land Purchase

Acts; and, if so, can he state to what extent such purchases have been made; and whether, under the Land Bill now before Parliament, provision will be made to prevent persons who do not themselves cultivate land, or require land for their own use, taking advantage of its provisions.

MR. WYNDHAM: Advances under the Land Purchase Acts can only be made to tenants holding land under a contract of tenancy. When the advance has been made, the proprietor becomes subject to the provisions of Section 30 of the Land Law Act, 1881, which prohibits the sub-division or letting of the holding while subject to the annuity, without the consent of the Land Commission. This provision is being further developed by Clause 49 of the present Land Bill.

Irish Town Park Tenants.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that there is a number of cases where tenants of town parks, as defined by the Land Law (Ireland) Acts, 1870, 1881, surrendered these holdings on the ground that the rent was too high, and that they are now in the occupation of the landlords; and, if so, will he insert a clause in the Irish Land Bill, giving these tenants the right to purchase same at a price to be fixed by the Land Commission.

MR. WYNDHAM: No, Sir. I have no knowledge of cases of the kind mentioned. Such holdings, however, would not come within the scope of the Land Purchase Acts. I cannot give the undertaking suggested at the end of the Question.

Mr. P. A. M'Hugh, M.P.—Prison Treatment.

MR. WILLIAM M'KILLOP (Sligo, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can now communicate to the House the result of his inquiries into the prison treatment of the hon. Member for North Leitrim.

MR. WYNDHAM: The hon. Member in question has been granted by the visiting committee of Sligo Prison all the rights and privileges to which he is entitled as a misdemeanant of the first division, and which it was in the power of the committee to grant. These privileges will be found enumerated in Parliamentary Papers Nos. 129 and 189 of 1902. In addition he has been allowed, on the recommendation of the medical officer, the use of tobacco and two hours' extra exercise daily. He has also been transferred to a well-lighted room in the hospital wing of the prison, and permitted the use of gas until ten o'clock nightly.

MR. DELANY: Is it not a fact that these privileges were at first refused?

MR. WYNDHAM: It would not be accurate to say that Mr. M'Hugh was first put in an ill-lighted cell and has since been placed in a well-lighted room.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): What will be the term of his imprisonment?

MR. WYNDHAM: As the hon. Member is aware, that rests entirely with the Judge who committed him.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): It is in fact unlimited.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Will the right hon. Gentleman communicate with the Judge—

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! That does not arise out of the Question on the Paper.

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors to Children Bill.

MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if his attention has been called to an appeal under the Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children) Act, in which the Lord Chief Justice said that the whole spirit of the Act was frustrated by the omission of a provision for punishing a subordinate who violated the Act without his employer's knowledge; and whether, in view of the approval of the Act manifested on its Second and Third Readings, he will, this session, introduce, or give facilities for, a short Act to amend this omission.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I can make no promise of legislation this session. I understand, however, that the judgment of the Lord Chief Justice raises a very important question, and the matter is being fully considered by the Secretary of State.

Denunciation of the German Commercial Treaty.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston): On behalf of the hon. Member for Tower Hamlets, Poplar Division, I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will lay upon the Table the correspondence that took place with the German Government in reference to the denunciation of the Commercial Treaty of 1865, and any further correspondence with the German Government that ensued in reference to the grant by Canada of preferential duties to British goods. I may explain that as the first part of the Question was answered yesterday, I now wish merely to press the latter portion.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The further correspondence with the German Government with reference to the refusal to grant the most-favoured-nation treatment to Canada is not yet complete, and for that reason it cannot be laid on the Table of the House at the present time.

SIR WALTER FOSTER: Will it be laid when complete?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I should like to have that Question put again when the proper time comes. I cannot imagine that when it is complete there will be any difficulty.

Sale of Adulterated Butter Bill.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he will state when it is proposed to take the Committee stage of the Sale of Adulterated Butter Bill.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: This Bill is waiting the Grand Committee stage, and I have no power to determine the order of business before Grand Committees. That is entirely left to the Grand Committees themselves.

Imperial Fiscal Policy.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): I wish to ask the Prime Minister a Question, of which I have given him private notice, with reference to the telegraphic message which is published in this morning's newspapers and which appears to have been received by a public office on the 6th inst. from the Governor of New South Wales. With reference to that message I would ask whether the view therein expressed of the intentions of his Majesty's Government with regard to preferential duties and retaliatory tariffs is accurate. Perhaps I may make my question more explicit by saying that the message refers to a certain declaration, and expresses great satisfaction at the declaration of the British Government of certain intentions. [Cries of "Read it."] When and where and by whom were these declarations made?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As I understand the right hon. Gentleman, the Question does not refer, and indeed, can hardly refer, to the whole of the message which is published in the newspapers. I presume it refers to this paragraph—

> "Also realising that what is Canada's turn to-day may be Australia's to-morrow, they express great satisfaction at the declaration by the British Government that every self-governing colony shall be secured in the free exercise of its right to enter into closer trade relations with the mother country."

That, I understand, is the paragraph to which the right hon. Gentleman calls my special attention. I do not know what declaration the Governor of New South Wales referred to in this statement; but I have to say on behalf of the Government that we certainly could not look with indifference on any attempt to penalise a British colony in the exercise of its right to enter into specially favourable commercial relations with the mother country.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean :) Can the right hon. Gentleman tell us what the Governor of New South Wales has to do with this matter, having regard to the fact that it concerns the Commonwealth of Australia?

MR. LOUGH : What is referred to in that declaration?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: That is precisely what I informed the House I cannot say. Perhaps the right hon. Baronet will address any Question on the subject to the Colonial Secretary, as being more competent to answer it.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE : Then I will ask the Secretary for the Colonies whether it is not the constitutional fact that these matters depend on the Commonwealth and not on the six colonies?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: That is perfectly true, but I do not see how that interferes with the expression of opinion on the subject by any Government of any of the self-governing colonies in Australia.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Will the right hon. Gentleman undertake to give due notice when the Sugar Convention Bill is to be brought in?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot fix a day for the Bill, but I think the request of the hon. Member for notice is a reasonable one, and I will endeavour to give due notice before it is taken.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): Is it proposed to take the Employment of Children Bill to-morrow?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir. I stated last night, probably after the hon. Member had left the House, that the Finance Bill would be taken on Friday, and I would not take the Employment of Children Bill if the discussion on the Budget Bill should terminate before the natural close of the sitting.

NEW BILL.

GUINEA POSTAL ORDERS BILL.

"To enable the Postmaster General to issue Postal Orders of the value of twenty-one shillings," presented by Mr. Henniker Heaton; supported by Mr. John Redmond, Mr. Henry Norman, Mr. Paulton, Sir John Blundell Maple, Mr. Evelyn Cecil, and Sir Thomas Dewar; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 242.]

SUPPLY [12TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903—04.

CLASS II.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £136,907, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and expenses of the Local Government Board."

*SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston) pointed out that a Vote of this magnitude necessarily ranged over a wide field of subjects, covering as it did the administration of the law relating to public health and the relief of the poor. He wished in the first instance to draw attention to one point which was exciting a certain amount of disquiet in the public mind. During last session a Bill was passed relating to cremation, and legalising that process of disposing of the dead. That Bill had caused the public to consider more carefully than hitherto the dangers which prevailed in connection with the present methods of administering the laws relating to the registration of deaths and the opportunities thereby offered for the commission of crime. Not long since there was a murder trial in which it was shown that a man had been able to poison three women, and might have even then escaped detection had not the friends of the third victim determined that there should be more investigation than usually takes place in such cases. The learned judge, in summing up the case, pointed out that if the bodies had been cremated the opportunity would have been lost of bringing the criminal to justice. In saying that, however, the learned judge forgot to mention that nobody was ever cremated in this country without tenfold more precautions being taken than were now taken in ordinary cases of death. So loose was the law and its administration in connection with ordinary burials, that there was abundant evidence that crime constantly escaped detection, and the meshes were drawn so loosely that criminals were easily able to carry on their iniquitous practices. There were cases brought before the Select Committee of 1893 in which in one case eleven, and in another twenty, murders were perpetrated by persons who, under the present loose system of death certification, were able to escape detection, it only being towards the end of a long series of crimes that it was possible to bring them to justice. Surely such a system of administration deserved some consideration at the hands of Parliament. I have thought it my duty to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to this matter, and to ask him some questions which will enable him to give us some information as to the steps he proposes to take, with a view to improving the administration of the law in this respect.

Every person who dies in this country has to be buried under a system of death certification laid down in the law of 1874, and in the previous Act of 1836. The Departmental Committee of last year which sat to consider the question of the disposal of bodies by cremation, in the course of their report stated that in some cases it had been found that the bodies of murdered persons had been buried without any certification of the cause of death, and that in other and more numerous cases certificates were given without sufficient inquiry, sometimes by medical men who had not seen the dead persons in their last illnesses or even after death. That Departmental Committee, which only reported this year, gave, as the result of their investigations, statements calculated to create a great amount of public disquietude and apprehension as to the proper detection of crime. He wished the right hon. Gentleman and the Committee to take particular note of the criticims of that Committee, which were made with a view to making if possible the administration of the law more stringent. As the law now existed people might be buried without any certificate whatever, these being called uncertified deaths. He thought he might congratulate the right hon Gentleman that, during the last few years, the number of these deaths had been diminishing. On looking at the statistics in regard to the number of persons buried without any evidence being forthcoming as to the cause of death — a thing which ought not to occur in any civilised community—he found that the percentage in the five years ending 1882, was 4·36; in the following five years it had fallen to 3½ per cent, in the succeeding quinquennial period it had gone down to 2·8 per cent., while in the five years ending 1897, when the question was receiving attention at the hands of a Select Committee, the percentage was 2·32. Finally, in 1898–99, it was just under 2 per cent., and he believed that this satisfactory state of affairs was due to a stronger administration of the law. The Registrar - General, in one of his Reports, had pointed out that in some cases as much as 15 and even 18 per cent. of the deaths in certain districts were uncertified. This was a really scandalous condition of things. In 1893, when it was examining into that question, the Select Committee found the astounding fact that while only 3 per cent. of the deaths were uncertified in Glasgow, no less than 42 per cent. were uncertified in Inverness-shire, thus showing the enormous possibilities for the occurrence of crime in some of the less densely populated districts of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The Select Committee at that time said they were forced to the conclusion that vastly more deaths occurred annually from foul play and criminal neglect than the law recognised. That was a statement which, in his opinion, ought to exercise the public mind, and to lead to some definite improvement in the administration of the law. The Committee also made a remark which he thought every one should take to heart. It was as to the proper basis for bringing about a better administration in connection with this matter. They said it should be made impossible for any person to disappear from his place in the community without satisfactory evidence being obtained of the cause of his disappearance. That was almost a truism as regarded the safeguarding of human life in a civilised community. So loosely, however, was the law administered that in 1893 a distinguished medical witness asserted that he saw no difficulty for anybody to perpetrate a crime, to get the whole matter certified, and registered, and the body buried, without anybody detecting it. That was a deliberate statement made before a Select Committee of this House ten years ago, and it was an unfortunate fact that since then the administration of the law had not been improved to any great extent.

With reference to these uncertified deaths, they were certified on the information of a person who was called a "qualified informant." What occurred was this. A person died without being medically attended, and someone representing him went to the registrar and made a statement as to the death. The statement might be fictitious or fraudulent, but, on that statement, and after, probably, a comparatively cursory inquiry by the registrar, who was not in all cases a fit person to undertake such duties, a certificate was granted and the body got rid of. The other day not very far from that House an extraordinary incident occurred. A medical man was called upon, I am informed, for a death certificate for a patient whom he had seen a little time previously. The doctor was a little more suspicious than some doctors are. Possibly he was a better reader of human nature than many. He doubted the statement as to the death, and went across to the house in which the supposed corpse was lying. He was shown the bed gear, but found that it only covered a dummy. Had it not been for the suspicions entertained by that doctor the man would probably have drawn his insurance money and have had a jolly time for himself. Seeing that such a thing was possible in the present state of the law, did it not point to the necessity for a stricter administration with a view to preventing such occurrences? It was also a fact in connection with the insurance of infant life that an appalling state of affairs existed in some populous centres, and the Select Committee discovered that numbers of children, insured for various sums, were, by neglect, sometimes criminal, and by actual crimes, got rid of and the insurance money drawn from the companies. Now, they wanted an administration so exact, so strict, and so thorough that these things should be rendered impossible in the interests of the community.

So much for the ordinary uncertified deaths. There were a certain number of bodies which were buried after inquiries held by the coroner. Unfortunately these inquiries were not made by the coroner himself in the form of an inquest; very often they were made by the coroner's officer, who was not always a competent person to find out whether a person had come to his or her death by fair or foul means. These inquiries, therefore, were not altogether satisfactory. Even coroners juries' verdicts were in some cases extremely unsatisfactory. A Committee of that House which sat a year or two ago—the Water-Gas Committee—especially drew attention to this matter by observing, in their Report, that they were so much impressed with the insufficiency and untrustworthiness of the statistics relating to particular causes of mortality, which could be gathered from the returns of the verdicts of coroners juries, that they ventured to strongly recommend that some steps should be taken to secure that those verdicts should lend themselves more readily to clear classification by the Registrar-General. They went on to recommend further that where the coroner was in possession of a medical certificate, or where medical evidence was taken at the inquest, a copy of the certificate or an abstract of the evidence should be appended to the coroner's certificate when it was sent to the Registrar-General. He thought if the right hon. Gentleman would express a desire that this should be done by the coroners throughout the country it would render the statistics of mortality much more accurate, and be useful in causing a more careful investigation into many of the uncertified deaths. An illustration was given to the Committee, by an official from Somerset House, of the unsatisfactory nature of these verdicts. An inquest had been held on the body of a child three months old, found dead, and the verdict was that there was no evidence to show that this child was born alive. When they had a verdict like that sent up as a deliberate expression of opinion as to the death of a child three months old, they could easily understand what remarkably little value attached to those verdicts in connection with the preparation of vital statistics. He thought he had said enough to show that, in connection with these uncertified deaths, there was great opportunity for crime, because no sufficient care was taken to examine into the condition and circumstances under which people had died. Some municipalities had taken up this matter and arranged that where there was no evidence how a person came to die there should be a local investigation. In Manchester when a person died and the death was not properly certified, the local officer of health employed one of the sanitary inspectors or visitors, to go round the locality and inquire into the circumstances under which the person died. It was an inquiry simply carried out by the local authority in the way of administration. It was an inquiry which led to the detection of fraud and sometimes to the detection of crime. In Glasgow and Edinburgh the municipalities adopted a similar method. The local medical officer of health reported these cases to the Procurator-Fiscal, and he held what was equivalent to an inquest in England, or granted a certificate for burial on the application of the medical officer of health. He thought the right hon. Gentleman might well encourage that system, and especially in the more populous centres.

Another matter which he wished to press on the attention of the Committee was that a large number of deaths were certified, but they were called uncertified because they were notified by illegal practitioners of medicine. Those persons often gave their certificates on their own forms and not on the prescribed forms. Although these certificates were not regarded as certifying the cause of death, they were regarded as information on which burial was allowed to take place. Consequently by this practice they had the door open widely to what might lead to the commission of crime. It also afforded an opportunity for the spread of disease and injury to the public health, which, in some instances, became serious. In the county of Durham cases of infectious disease had ended in death and had not been notified, and, not being notified, the disease was liable to spread through the districts and cause epidemics to occur. The County Council of Durham called the attention of the Registrar-General to the fact, in the interest of public health, and the Registrar-General decided that such certificates should in future be referred to the coroner for inquiry, in order to check the loose method of administration. Unfortunately a few months afterwards—probably without the cognisance of the President of the Local Government Board—the Registrar-General withdrew that salutary arrangement and allowed the old system to go on of permitting burial on the certificates of those unqualified practitioners. The same danger to public health was now going on in the districts. He thought the right hon. Gentleman might encourage registrars to go back to the more wholesome system, and so prevent uncertified deaths from being a danger to the community. Medical practitioners moreover often gave certificates of death in a very loose fashion. Deaths were sometimes certified by medical men who had not seen the patient in his last illness; and sometimes months after the patient had been seen by the doctor. One striking instance was narrated to him when Chairman of the Select Committee that inquired into this matter. A gentleman, who was known by his family and his doctor to be suffering from heart disease, died in London. The doctor, at the request of the family, was willing to grant a certificate that the gentleman died from heart disease. On examination a wound caused by a pistol shot over the region of the heart was found. The gentleman had died from suicide. That case opened up a whole vista which showed a way in which people with chronic disease might be got rid of, sometimes by their own action, and sometimes by the criminal action of others. Such things ought not to be possible. There ought to be something done in the way of stricter administration of the law to prevent such occurences. If medical practitioners granted certificates without having seen the patients for weeks or months before death, then the possibilities of crime were absolutely appalling. He asked the right hon. Gentleman to turn his attention to this matter, and to endeavour to bring about a better administration of the law. An alteration of the law might be required to remedy this state of matters, but he could not help thinking that something more might be done than at present to make the administration of the law more strict, and to guard the public against the commission of crime. He asked the right hon. Gentleman whether the registrars throughout the country had been warned to accept certificates only on the prescribed forms, and so check the acceptance of loose forms of certificates that were often sent to notify death; whether any steps had been taken to induce registrars to refer uncertified deaths to coroners with the view of preventing the spread of disease and the commission of crime; and whether any steps had been taken to carry into effect the recommendation of the Water-Gas Committee. He further asked what steps the right hon. Gentleman or the Department had taken to encourage local authorities to carry out local inquiries into the cause of death in all uncertified cases within the area of their jurisdiction as was done in Manchester, Glasgow, and Edinburgh. He believed that if some such steps were taken they should guard against, not only danger to the public health, but also opportunity for the commission of crime.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) said the hon. Member for the Ilkeston Division had introduced his observations by proposing to reduce the salary of the President of the Local Government Board. He would like to see the right hon. Gentleman very much better paid instead of having his salary reduced. They would all agree that that Department was overworked and underpaid. He failed to understand why the Board of Trade and the Local Government Board should be placed on a different pecuniary basis to the Home Office and other Departments where the work was less hard. Since the introduction of the County Councils the work of the Local Government Board had very largely increased, whilst it is known that the work of the Home Office had diminished year by year. A Parliamentary inquiry was wanted into the status and emoluments of the different officers. It was a curious thing that the clerks of the Local Government Board and the Board of Trade were paid a less salary than the clerks of the Home Office and other Departments, who were said to belong to a higher grade. In answer to questions asked on several occasions, they had been told that higher qualifications were required for the Home Office than for the Local Government Board and the Board of Trade. He would have thought that the case was exactly opposite. They all appreciated the highly scientific investigations that were carried on by the Local Government Board, and which showed that the qualifications of its officials were higher rather than lower than those of the Home Office, where the work was that of the ordinary jog-trot routine. He had always been an advocate for the appointment of a Minister of Public Health. It would be an excellent arrangement to have a Minister to take charge of difficult and delicate questions relating to public health, which were now discharged by the Local Government Board. That Department was under-staffed, and there should be established a bureau for collecting information for which a medical man or sanitary officer could apply, and for establishing public laboratories for scientific and hygienic work. They had heard a great deal about infected bedding. The Minister for War was asked the other day to carry out a scientific investigation into the question of blankets, but they were told that no investigation could take place until the Officer Commanding in South Africa had sent in his report. Was it not possible, he asked, to have an investigation before the means of carrying it to a successful conclusion had been removed? There was no real evidence that the boys in the training ship were infected by these blankets. There was a school who alleged that such diseases were borne by the air, and he thought it would be of very great importance if the right hon. Gentleman, in combination with the Minister for War, were to investigate the matter. A unique opportunity was now afforded of finding out what were the real facts of the case.

He was glad that his hon. friend had brought forward the question of registration of deaths. He had sat on a Commitee on the question, of which his hon. friend was chairman. That Committee gave in a Report, which was entirely conclusive, that some legislation was necessary. Ten years ago 5,000 people died without any registration; and at the present moment a large amount of crime was going on undetected by the law, in consequence of the loose and insufficient method of death registration. Moreover, poisoning was now carried on by a much more scientific method than in the old days with arsenic. If any scientific person were to lay his mind to making murder a fine art—by the use of these terrible alkaloids which came from decomposing fish and other foods—fearful results, which would be entirely unchecked under the present law, would follow. He pressed on the Government to take up this question before long and introduce a Death Registration Reform Bill. He should like to see the French system introduced into this country, by which a scientific man, detached from ordinary practice, should be appointed to every registration district, whose sole duty would be to attend all cases and see that all the evidence was complete so as to enable him to certify that death was due to natural causes.

He had always taken an interest in the poor children under the Local Government Board—their education, morals, and health. He must confess that while certain benefits had been introduced by recent legislation, and a great deal had been done by the Local Government Board to improve matters, the state of things was still not highly satisfactory. He would not speak of the morals or the education of these poor children, but he was entitled to speak of the medical conditions under which they were brought up and of the unsatisfactory nature of the physical training which they received in these establishments. The system of segregating children in large masses, in barrack schools could not be good for them. They could not stamp out many of the blood diseases from such prisons—for they were far more like prisons than hospitals or schools. Then they were managed with hard officialism; and it took a very strong-minded, highly-educated man to stand up against such management It would be much better to break up these schools altogether and put the children into little homes where they should have something like the care of a father or a mother, and have their health, morals, and education improved all round. The present system was, at all events, bad physically for the children.

MR. FLOWER (Bradford, W.) said that this question had been brought so often before the Committee that it seemed to be a well-worn topic; but it was so important as to justify their bringing it again to the attention of the Local Government Board. It was a fact that there were in England and Wales 50,000 children under sixteen years of age who were under the control of the boards of guardians. That constituted a problem in itself of very considerable magnitude. This sum-total of 50,000 might well be reduced if the guardians were from time to time to adopt the policy, carried out by some boards of closely examining the circumstances of each child for which they were responsible. He believed that the result would be a very startling reduction in the number of the children with which they would require to deal. He referred to the experience of the Whitechapel Union. An exhaustive examination was made there in collaboration with the Charity Organisation Society, with the result that thirty-five out of seventy-six children were discharged to the care of parents and relatives. The Lambeth Guardians on one occasion were able to discharge eleven out of fifty-three children in six months; the Edmonton

Board got rid of eleven; and the Norwich Board seventy-four; and only a fortnight ago the Gloucester Board of Guardians found, on close investigation, that they were maintaining many children whose parents were residing in the town. He thought the Local Government Board would do well to call upon all boards of guardians to have a more frequent call-over of the children depending upon them. He agreed with the hon. Member opposite as to the evil results which followed from the segregation of children in these large barrack schools; and it was a matter of regret that the tendency towards institutionalism was still receiving some favour and support from the Local Government Board. He knew the difficulties which the Local Government Board had in dealing with the plans and projects of what he supposed would be termed popularly-elected bodies; but he thought that the Local Government Board could do a great deal more than it did by Provisional Order with regard to the disposal of those children. Certainly it was remarkable that out of the 50,000 children of whom he had spoken, up to the present only about 8,500 were boarded out. Every hon. Member would recognise that the boarding-out of those children, if wisely and thoughtfully carried out, was an ideal method of disposing of them. It was not only that it was far and away the most economical method, but it was the best for the children morally and physically, and would relieve them in their after career, as far as possible, from that taint of pauperism which was so painful to think of in connection with a young and opening life.

The Local Government Board might do more than it had done in encouraging the system of boarding out. He thought that the difficulties which had been alleged against the extension of the system were theoretical rather than practical. Certainly, one had only to apply to the institutions which boarded out their children to find that, by taking a little care and a little trouble, they had no difficulty in finding suitable foster parents. The secretary to the Home for Waifs and Strays stated that the boarding-out system, in his opinion, was one of the best possible methods for providing homes for young children. He added that his Society had always adopted that plan, during its existence of twenty-two years, for all young children under the age of seven, and that the reports received every fortnight from the Society's lady inspectors, one being a qualified doctor, showed that, with very few exceptions, the 700 children boarded out were thoroughly well treated and cared for by their foster mothers. It frequently happened that when children were old enough to learn a trade in one of the special industrial homes of the Society, the foster mothers preferred to adopt them entirely rather than part with them. The children, therefore, not only got a real home, but, oftentimes, also a mother's affection. The secretary of the Children's Country Holiday Fund said that they commenced with sending nineteen children for a month into the country; now they sent 35,000 every year. The experiment was attended with the greatest success, and the secretary was of opinion that no difficulty need be found in obtaining visitors in the country willing to undertake the supervision of the children. The inspectors who visited the villages during August found very little to complain of in the treatment of the children, the villagers displaying extraordinary kindness and generosity towards their London guests; and the Fund had a considerable number of applications from persons who were willing to adopt children permanently. He would appeal to his right hon. friend to do what he could to extend the system of boarding out. If projects from boards of guardians for the erection of large buildings for schools for children were sanctioned by the Local Government Board, a considerable expenditure of money would inevitably be incurred, and a step would be taken which it would be very difficult indeed to retrace. He described the system as an ideal system; and he would remind the Committee that it was also a very economical system. The contrast between the various average amounts expended per child per annum under the different methods was really quite remarkable. The average annual minimum charge per child per annum in a barrack school was from £28 to £30. In one large school of 640 children the average cost was £34 per annum, and in another school of 350 children the annual cost was £40. That in itself was a strong argument in favour of boarding-out. He would appeal to his right hon. friend to extend the power of boarding out beyond London so that children adopted under the 1899 Act could be dealt with in that way.

Another method of dealing with children—the method of scattered homes—had also a considerable measure of success. In the city of Bradford, which he himself represented, that system was in force, with highly satisfactory results. The plain fact of the matter was that the best way of dealing with those children was to endeavour to bring them as much as possible within the ordinary child life of the locality in which they were placed. Many guardians already did that; and he knew of no instance where the experiment was ever regretted. The Stepney Board of Guardians sent their children from Stepney Workhouse to a Board school in the Tower Hamlets. That certainly was better than a barrack school; but he did not regard it as an entirely satisfactory solution as the children returned every evening to the workhouse. They were treated with kindness and consideration, but he did not want to have children in a workhouse at all. It seemed to him that those institutions were admirable for abnormal children, but altogether undesirable for normal children. The ordinary child was much better dealt with by some such separate method as he had suggested, either by boarding out or in a scattered home; but for children who were mentally or physically deficient, institutional life was almost inevitable. He wished he could think that there had been more progress in the matter; but he was sorry to say that that was not the case. During the last five years no less a sum than £48,000 had been spent in adding to the existing Metropolitan Poor Law schools. The Local Government Board had sanctioned, on a large scale, schemes which were a more or less modified form of institutionalism. The Woolwich Board of Guardians, with 350 children, had built a village community at a cost of £77,000 for building alone; the Greenwich Board of Guardians, with 600 children to provide for, had laid the foundation of a village community which was to cost about £150,000; the Stepney Board of Guardians, with 300 children to provide for, was building an institution at a cost of about £40,000. The evils of such an aggregation of children had been pointed out with great force by his hon. friend the Member for Aberdeenshire, who had spoken with great knowledge of medical matters on the subject. Unfortunately, from time to time one heard of the outbreak of easily preventable disease, but not easily preventable if a large number of children were aggregated together. During the past twelve months in those schools for only thirteen weeks were they free of illness. The same story ran through the whole of the schools. He drew attention to the condition of things at the Hollymount School, Tottington, Lancashire. Out of 200 children, only eighty-three were free from disease. No condition of things could be more painful, and all these diseases were such as spring from want of cleanliness and proper nourishment. The diet was—

> "Breakfast—tea without milk, and bread and butter. Dinner; potatoes mashed with the water they were boiled in—on one day peas and pea water, and on another day rice and rice water."

It would be seen there was neither milk nor meat in the dietary. For tea and supper, weak tea without milk, and bread and butter. Such a diet was not sufficient, and a board of guardians which handed over its children to such an institution should be blamed, and some censure should be passed upon the inspector of the Local Government Board who passed such a dietary. As a result of the inquiry that was instituted the President of the Local Government Board declined to certify further Hollymount School, and withdrew the certificate. Some changes had taken place in the management of the school, and it had now been recertified. So far as this school was concerned it had now been placed on a proper basis, but what a reflection it was for the Committee that this school should have been carried on for so many years before the full facts came to light. He concluded with an earnest appeal that his right hon. friend would do what he could to extend the system of dealing with these children by means of boarding-houses and scattered homes. It would be hard, no doubt, for the Local Government Board to withstand the demand of boards of guardians and to reject their proposals, but much could be done by advice and sympathetic encouragement to those working in the direction of reforms.

*MR. CROOKS (Woolwich) said he had listened with considerable interest to the two previous speakers, and his mind had been carried back to the practical application of the systems of the suggestions made. He had seen the system alluded to at work, and he complimented the Local Government Board on the enormous improvement which had take place in the conduct of these schools in the last ten years. The hon. Member for Bradford had quoted several authorities who had successfully boarded out, but the Waifs and Strays Society would have nothing to do with either Poor Law officials or Poor Law children, nor would the Country Holiday Society. When dealing with Poor Law children a totally different condition arose. Twelve years ago there was no warmer advocate for the settlement of the whole difficulty by the system of boarding out than he. It was an ideal system in theory but its success by practical application had yet to be proved. They were limited as to the class of children who could be boarded out. They were only allowed to board out orphan and deserted children; that limited the number to begin with; they were also limited to the number of homes. Many applications were made by old people to be allowed to adopt children on charitable grounds, but when inquiries were made as to the incomes of these people the guardians generally discovered the charitable reason which actuated them to board these children. He knew one case where a widow boarded four children, which was two more than she ought to have done according to the law, for which she had 16s. a week. She lived in a district where the labourers' wages were 11s. and she went about like a duchess in the district. In another case which he personally investigated, he wanted to see the child, and asked how the boy was getting on, and he was told, "Oh, all right; but he is growing so big and eats such a lot. Could not you take him away and send me a smaller boy?" The boarded-out children, so far from losing the pauper taint, were known frequently more by the name of the union from which they came than by their own names; in fact "boarding-out" was the staple industry of the village. Instead of being merged into the village life, the boys were frequently sent into the Navy or the Army. When boarding-out was good there was nothing better, but the difficulty was to find suitable homes, and then only a special class could be dealt with.

Then as to scattered homes. Sheffield was the Mecca of Poor Law administration, and it was there the scattered home system was really started. The children in the homes were said to be so contented and so lovingly looked after that they really did not know they were Poor Law children at all. He did not believe it. A child had only one mother; every thing else was a substitute. A "scattered home" with fourteen children under one woman was nothing like a working man's home; it was a little workhouse, and not a home at all. As these children were playing with others in the schoolground, he was challenged to pick out those from the home, but as they marched past he placed his hand on the shoulder of every one. How did he do it? It was Friday afternoon. The boy with the dirty collar or the boots with untidy or broken laces was going home to his mother; the boy with the spotless collar and carefully cleaned boots was going back to the institution. He went to the home and asked whether the boys ever played in the streets. He was told that they did sometimes, but when he said the place was their home and they ought to go out to play every night, he was met with the reply "That's all very well; you haven't to keep them clean; I have." So that although it was a "home," institution law prevailed. He disagreed entirely with the suggestion that institutions were wanted for abnormal children; they were just the class for whom small homes were necessary. With regard to the physique of the children in the so-called barrack-schools—although he objected to the term, which was equally applicable to Eton—he invited Members generally to attend an exhibition of physical training to be given at Church House to-morrow by these very children. It would then be seen that the schools were not such dreadful places as they were sometimes made out to be. An open mind should be kept on these matters. He was glad to say that that was the attitude of the Local Government Board. Wherever they saw a good thing they should be ready to adopt it. Foster-mothers could not be had for the asking. It seemed to be thought that they had only to put a penny in the slot in order to get the finest mother in the world. Plenty could be secured who would make the children do all the work, but that was not the class desired.

He agreed that children should not be kept in the workhouse a moment longer than was necessary, but when one union was quoted against another difficulties arose. The conditions and circumstances of every child had to be inquired into. Whitechapel had seventy-six children in the Forest Gate School, as against Poplar's 600. At first sight that seemed to be a magnificent achievement for Whitechapel. But Whitechapel had an enormous Jewish population, the children of which were looked after by the Jewish Board of Guardians. Much the same thing happened in St. George's-in-the East, although this union has schools at Upton Park. But the poverty in these districts, where they were supposed to have abolished outdoor relief, was simply awful. The whole question of Poor Law administration had to be looked at broadly; it must not be narrowed down to particular districts where they went on the Charity Organisation principle of giving nothing until diligent inquiry had been made into a person's antecedents. The Local Government Board recognised the principle that the need of a person was the reason he should be helped at once, and his antecedents inquired into afterwards. Poplar had 900 such children. Stepney had just opened schools at Stifford for their children. Woolwich union also had erected homes recently, and I question if hon. Members could improve upon either of these places. The boards of guardians could not be told to inquire into the circumstances of each individual child, and to turn a number into the street. Guardians had a greater responsibility to the State than the mere turning out of the child. They had to see that he was not brought up a beggar, ne'er-do-well, or anything of that sort. Each case must be dealt with as it arose, as the Poor Law child had no parallel in any other class. He congratulated both the late and the present President of the Local Government Board upon the success of the new dietary scale. Now there was no earthly excuse for any board of guardians to under-feed the children. It was not the fault of the Local Government Board but the fault of many boards of guardians that the present dietary scale was not put into operation long ago. He wished to put three questions to the President of the Local Government Board. The right hon. Gentleman was reported to have said that in the near future the duties of boards of guardians would, in all probability, be delegated to the Borough Councils. He questioned whether any authority they might delegate these powers to could do the work so efficiently as the men and women who were now doing it. He wished to have a clear answer upon that point.

He also wished to know whether the Local Government Board had considered or would consider the desirability of equalising the charges in London for outdoor relief. They found in London that the poorer the district the greater expense it incurred in dealing with the poor. That was to say, it was to the advantage of the richer parishes that there should be an aggregation of workmen in other parts, and the toilers who broke down in health would be more frequent there than in the richer parishes. The poor they had to deal with, both indoor and outdoor, ought to be as much a charge upon the richer parishes as upon the poorer parishes of London. He did not offer any objection to the richer parishes being allowed such control as the Local Government Board might think desirable. Boards of guardians were not now inclined to say to every applicant, "You must come into the House, we cannot give you outdoor relief." It seemed to him that they ought not to be compelled to so enlarge their workhouses as to embrace all who applied, because the people inside were a charge upon the Metropolitan Common

Poor Fund. They should not be compelled to enlarge their workhouse when they could help to keep people outside the workhouse. Therefore he wished to ask if the President of the Local Government Board would consider the desirability of equalising the charges upon all localities for outdoor relief. Did the Committee realise that in England and Wales, under the heading of the Poor Rate, about £26,500,000 was raised every year. That was an appalling sum, but on the top of that they were going to ask for old-age pensions. The Committee would scarcely believe that this £26,500,000 had nothing to do with the poor as far as more than half of that charge was concerned. No less than £14,500,000 was for charges that had absolutely nothing to do with the poor, for only about £11,500,000 was for purposes absolutely connected with the Poor Law. When they got to still closer quarters they would find that the £11,500,000 included superannuation allowances, buildings, furniture, maintenance, and officers' expenses, but for the poor, indoor and outdoor, only £5,250,000 was spent. Consequently only £5,250,000 went to the people for whom this £26,500,000 was collected. Did the right hon. Gentleman not think it was a shame that his Department should be credited with the raising of £26,500,000 for the poor when they only actually got £5,250,000 of it. This always seemed to him to be an appalling state of things.

Mr. TOULMIN (Bury, Lancashire) said he wished to say a word or two in defence of the boarding-out system, but would first allude to Hollymount School which had been mentioned by the hon. Member for Bradford. He believed that an absolute and radical change had taken place there, and its present condition was such as would satisfy hon. Members who desired that the children should be properly dealt with. At a private inspection made a day or two ago, a gentleman in the neighbourhood found the children in excellent condition, and the state of things there had been entirely changed. In regard to the outbreak of ophthalmia, it was gradually disappearing under the care of a specialist who was called in before the inquiry took place. One ground of complaint had been that there was not a responsible Committee on the spot, but that had now been altered, and a responsible Committee of seven persons had been appointed. Another complaint was that the children had not been properly looked after because most of the sisters were unaccustomed to English ways. Now almost all of them were either English or British. Formerly in regard to medical attendance the doctor was paid for each visit, but now he received a salary and was under an engagement to pay so many visits. The old system in regard to medical attendance led perhaps to economy in calling the doctor in, and was consequently an objectionable system. The Nursing staff had also been improved by placing a certificated nurse of experience in charge of it, and the teaching staff had been improved by the appointment of a certificated teacher. As to the dietary scale, he had it in his possession, and his hon. friend sitting near him had examined it and declared that it was a very good scale. He had had some experience of the dietaries in similar institutions, and he thought this was a very good scale indeed, and if it was adhered to, the children at all events would not suffer from lack of food. A considerable number of the children attending these schools were in the scholars procession which took place in Lancashire towns during Whit week, and he was told that they looked remarkably well, and were exceedingly well clothed. Whilst he did not advocate these aggregations of children, he did not see how they were to do without them at the present moment.

The special point upon which he desired to address a question to the President of the Local Government Board was with regard to the regulations and conditions on which children were boarded out, and he also wished to know whether they could not expedite the rate at which children in the workhouses were being taken out and dealt with. There were various methods of dealing with these children, but the one method which was not desirable was that they should be retained in the workhouses amongst other paupers. Children who had to mix up with the other inmates in workhouses were under the most unfavourable conditions, because they were surrounded by life's failures, and they had not those incentives which either cottage homes or the boarding-out system gave them to exercise their own intellects and advance themselves in life. The children had no opportunity in the workhouse for any home training, and the food they received there, so far as they knew, might come down from heaven. They did not know how it was cooked or prepared, nor did they feel that their own comfort and happiness depended upon their own exertions. Their own individual faults and failings were not discovered in the workhouse, and when children were taken out of the workhouse and put into a cottage home very often a number of them were found to have objectionable habits. That, however, was not the fault of the home to which they came, but the fault of the home from which they had been taken, The self-reliance and fitness of children for responsibilities was not developed under the workhouse system and children had been frequently returned after being sent out, because they were not familiar with the ordinary routine of daily life. He thought the boarding-out system had its own special dangers, which were recognised by those who were familiar with the system. These were dangers which had to be guarded against. There ought, of course, to be adequate inspection by lady inspectors and by capable voluntary committees who ought to be well kept up to their work. There was plenty of philanthropic aid available, and, properly directed, it could be usefully employed. His own experience was provincial and not metropolitan. He had no doubt the conditions in the Metropolis were very different indeed. As one safeguard, it might be advisable to increase the number of lady inspectors at present in the service of the Local Government Board. Of the 50,000 children for whom the administrators of the Poor Law were responsible, 8,000 were boarded out, an increasing number, but he was sorry to see the numbers boarded out outside their own unions decreasing. As to the objections which had been taken to the system, he found that children did get into the stream of life when boarded out in properly selected homes. They, to a certain extent, formed home ties with their foster parents, which had a great steadying influence upon them when they grew up. The hon. Member for East Bradford had stated that in one union the number of children directly under the control of the guardians had been reduced by one half after the adoption of boarding-out. That was also his own experience in the union with which he was connected.

Many of the objections to the boarding-out system mentioned by the hon. Member for Woolwich were well known to those who advocated the system. They had been warned by the Local Government Board that there should not be too many boarded-out children in any one village. This instruction was given so that boarding out should not become the industry of the village. Even if the children were not merged in the life of the village he held that the training they received when boarded out, was healthier, better, and cheaper than the training they received in a large establishment, and was better for them if they afterwards went into the Army and Navy. In reference to Local Government Board limitations, he wished to ask definitely whether the age limit could not be removed for boarding-out beyond the union. He had found occasions where the limit of ten in the case of a dull child was rather an obstacle. He was afraid that the regulations of the Local Government Board were overlooked in those cases, and it might be better that the limit should be relaxed. With regard to the downward limit he thought a strong case could be made out. Children could not now be boarded out below two years of age. If a child of two could be boarded out he did not see why a child of one should not. As soon as a child passed the absolute nursing stage he thought the guardians should be allowed to board it out. When children were as young as two years of age they sometimes learned habits which were difficult to get rid of. He did not see the necessity for the limit. He believed this relaxation was recommended so long ago as 1896 by a Departmental Committee, and it had also been favourably considered by the North Western Poor Law Conference. Referring to children adopted under the Poor Law

Act of 1899 the hon. Member said these were frequently children of very unfortunate antecedents. He thought the relaxation of the boarding-out beyond the union order should also apply to these children because it would certainly be of advantage for them. He thought it would be advisable that the formation of voluntary committees in the union should be encouraged if not made absolutely necessary. There were strong arguments in favour of making it absolutely compulsory in regard to the boarding-out of children within the union. These committees could visit the children more frequently than the officers, and their visits were not so objectionable. Members of the committee frequently interested themselves in the lives of the children, and kept an eye upon them afterwards. He disliked chiefly the association of the children in the workhouse with the older paupers who were necessarily there. Many of them might be compared to old hulks lying up there with no prospect but to stay there in such comfort as was provided for them, until they died. But the children were young vessels starting out, and everything possible should be done to give them a fair chance of making a successful voyage through life.

*SIR FRANCIS POWELL (Wigan) said that as a member of a Bradford union which was the third largest in England he had had opportunity of gaining some experience in the administration of the Poor Law. There was one law which he thought must be universally applied, and that was that children ought not to be admitted into any workhouse. In his opinion it was totally unnecessary that any child should even for a moment enter those gloomy portals; it should be in some room entirely separate from the workhouse or Poor Law sentiment. He also thought that the "barrack" schools were wholly unnecessary; they were not required in the large union of Bradford, and he believed they were not necessary in any union in the country. They must remember the unhappy condition of some of these children, in far too many cases they were physically and mentally feeble, often diseased both in mind and body. He did not think that in dealing with them it was possible to condemn any one system. Several speakers had denounced the boarding-out system, and others had spoken of separate cottage homes. He believed there was no arrangement that was not open to dangers and criticisms, and he believed the best and wisest plan was to make use of all these different institutions, which, if not quite suited to all cases, would in many cases be found of great value. In Yorkshire they had found great benefit from the boarding-out system, but he agreed that it was a system which required most careful administration and continual thoughtfulness. In many cases where the children were wholly and absolutely separated from the pauper community they had found great benefit from the system of separate homes. It was perfectly true that if there were fourteen children in a home that was not an exact reproduction of a working man's family; but they were dealing with what was possible. It was wholly impossible to find homes for all these children in working class families where there were only five or six children. They could not completely produce the family life which existed in the homes of the working people in the manufacturing districts; but the children were trained differently from those in the large institutions—their life was conducted by simple appliances instead of by pompous arrangements. They went to school—Anglican, R. C., or undenominational—and mingled with children of the same age.

There was one great difficulty in connection with separate homes, and that was the industrial training. A recommendation was made in one report that the children should be sent to some industrial training school. He believed there was much in that suggestion, and he hoped some system might be devised whereby these young people might have some part of their dependent life devoted to industrial instruction which would fit them for taking a place in society and obtaining an honest livelihood. In last year's report there was a reference to the practice pursued in the counties of Sussex, Surrey, and

Kent. It stated that the girls were most carefully trained in industrial work of every kind, and the result was that the number of applications for children going out to service was so large that the committee, who took the greatest possible interest in the work, were able to make a very careful selection of the places to which the girls were sent. The children, it was added, did better than the workhouse children, and in point of fact their training was a real education. There was a difficulty in the supervision of these homes. The utmost care had to be taken in the selection of the foster mothers, and the supervision of their conduct should be firm and at the same time gentle. He wished to refer to the great success which had attended the labours of the board of guardians of the Bradford union in dealing with the aged and deserving poor. The care taken in the investigation of these cases was, he ventured to say, absolutely exemplary. It was a great pleasure to find that, owing to the care taken by the guardians, the aged and deserving poor now received such an amount of outdoor relief as raised them out of the evils of penury. And as regarded those in the workhouses there was the most careful supervision to secure every comfort and solace for those of advanced years or debilitated by old age.

*MR. TENNANT (Berwickshire) said the Prime Minister had informed the House yesterday that he had been nine years in the House when he made certain suggestions to Mr. Gladstone with, he hoped, becoming modesty. He had been in the House for exactly that term, and he trusted to make the few suggestions which he was about to make with a like becoming modesty. The hon. Member who had just sat down stated that many suggestions had been made as to the treatment of these pauper children—some of them good and some bad. Everybody however, he thought, believed that the system of large aggregations of these children was bad though it might be difficult to do away with. He wished to call attention to a few of the results of the system. At Ipswich, ring-worm was so bad that the children, against the wishes of the board of guardians, had to be boarded out. At Norwood the death rate was thirty-six per 1000, or double that of the borough itself. At Hanwell eighty-eight children were in danger of their lives from suppuration, and 283 children were suffering from ophthalmia. In another union a child died from pneumonia only the day after it was discovered that it was suffering from the disease. That showed that in these institutions there was not proper supervision. At Richmond, scarlet fever broke out, and there were five cases in the home. His hon. friend had drawn attention to the mental and moral improvement that might be secured by putting the children into small homes The development of character must necessarily be bad with such an enormous aggregation of children in some of these institutions. The system under which these children were treated was dull and mechanical, there was an absence of that healthy interest in the world about them which one would like to see developed in children. They were necessarily denied all affection and love in these large institutions. There were 1,000 children at Hanwell Asylum, and he understood that it was proposed to certify what was now called the Ophthalmic Block as a barrack school for over 750 normal children. He maintained that that building, which was only of corrugated iron, ought not to be licensed for such a purpose. The predecessor of the right hon. Gentleman had given an undertaking, that his Department would decrease the number of children in these schools, and in no case allow an addition to them to be made.

As to the Hollymount case, he congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on having withdrawn the certificate from that school. It was an abominable case which one would have thought could hardly have existed in this country. But how came it about that the certificate was returned to that school? His hon. friend had already stated that the system of dietary was completely altered; he hoped it was; it had need to be. But it was not only a question of diet; it was a question of the general treatment of the children. The Committee would hardly believe it, but when the children were examined and placed in a bath they screamed loudly, and the girls were found to be suffering from sore heads, eczema, skin eruptions, and other diseases. Further, they were practically starved. The Report said that "now and again" the children were suffering from ophthalmia. What were the facts? As soon as they were examined it was found that out of 230 children only eighty-four were free from disease, and only forty-nine out of 212 were found to be free from ophthalmia. That was what the gentleman who wrote the report described as suffering from ophthalmia "now and again." That was, of course, a form of deception, but was not quite so bad as what followed. A certain girl, Kate Mallon, was found to be suffering from phthisis, and was not expected to recover. That girl was supposed to have written a letter in which it was said that they had a jolly time, that Father Christmas had brought them sweets and toys and other things too numerous to mention, and that they were in the best of health with rosy faces and bright eyes. That letter was shown to the girl, and she was asked why she wrote it, and she replied that she had never written it at all. That disclosed a very serious state of things. He understood that the right hon. Gentleman withdrew the certificate from that school on the 14th October; but he was also informed —he did not know whether correctly or not—that the right hon. Gentleman recertificated the school before the end of the year. Considering all the right hon. Gentleman had ascertained as to what had happened in the school, it seemed to him that the right hon. Gentleman was very rapid in the measures he took in order to secure that the children should be treated in a better manner in future; that the diet, for instance, should be sufficient to nourish their bodies, that care should be taken that their health should be decently looked after, and that the system of intimidating the girls should not be continued. He sincerely hoped that the right hon. Gentleman had been able to assure himself on all those points. It appeared to him to be of the utmost importance that, in a case like that, an example should be made of the school. He was informed that this was only one of many religious institutions all over the country where similar things, were going on; and it seemed to him a crying shame that they should be permitted.

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University) said he should like to make a few observations on the general treatment of pauper children. His first observation was that the public authority should have complete control over all children whose parents received Poor Law relief, because, in asking for relief, the parents would have to submit to any conditions which Parliament, the Local Government Board, and the board of guardians prescribed. Those conditions should be conceived solely in the interests of the children themselves. He believed it was now generally accepted as both just and expedient that the public authority should do the best it could for those children; that it should give them the best education, and in every way fit them to become citizens. It was good economy to spend money in that way. The old idea of the time of Oliver Twist, to make the education of those children as cheap as possible, was now scouted by everyone. All they differed on now was not the object but the means of attaining it. It appeared to him that it was a very wrong thing for either the State or the local authority to use children for the purpose of putting some kind of coercion on their parents. He said that for two reasons. In the first place, a child was far too costly an object to be expended in that way. To sacrifice the whole future of a child in order to make the parent do his duty was an asset too costly for the object to be carried out. His second objection was that it was wholly illusory, and did not make the parent in any way do his duty by the child. He did not think that the public or the Local Government Board sufficiently realised the fact, which was unfortunately true, that a child was a very valuable asset. A child could be used for all sorts of purposes, such as begging, or performing in public, and so far from children being a burden, they were often brought to theatres, racecourses, and public entertainments of that kind, and were hired out to persons who found it worth their while to pay for their use. Many years ago a Departmental Committee of the Local Government Board under the presidency of the late Mr. Mundella was appointed to consider the condition of pauper schools. He himself was a member of that Committee. The Report which the Committee presented attracted a great deal of attention, and the Local Government Board, under the presidency of his right hon. friend the Member for Sleaford, gave certain assurances to the House of Commons and the public that some at least of the recommendations of the Report would be carried out.

The first point to which he wished to call attention was a point on which everyone was agreed, and that was that children should not be allowed to remain in workhouses. There were differences of opinion on other points; on that there was none. That was brought very clearly home to all the members of the Committee, not only by the evidence but by personal visits to workhouses, and by seeing the actual condition of the children. He defied anyone to see the condition of the children as the members of the Committee saw it, and not hold earnestly the opinion that no child should under any circumstances be in a workhouse. The great objection was that those children were in most workhouses mixed up with the adult paupers; very often they were attended by pauper attendants who were frequently people of extremely bad character, and quite unfit to look after any respectable and decent child. The children heard all the foul language which, he was sorry to say, prevailed in workhouses, and which was one of the chief objections which decent people had to workhouse life. In some workhouses where the children lived in the workhouse it was very deleterious to the children, but in others where the children were sent away to the Board schools and had separate quarters from the adults the conditions were not so bad as they usually were for the children in the workhouses. The Board of Guardians of Chelsea and Kensington kept the children outside the workhouse. They had a receiving house for them, and the children never came into the workhouse, and since the plan had been adopted by Chelsea and Kensington other boards of guardians had done the same. Having said all that, he pointed out that there were at this moment according to the Returns of the Local Government Board more children in the London workhouses than before the Report was made. At the time the Report was furnished there were 2,294 children in the London workhouses. At the present moment the returns showed a total of 3,004. In the country generally there were in the Home Counties upwards of 20,000 similarly circumstanced, and in many cases those children were in the charge of pauper superintendents, and had no education worthy of the name. He appealed to the President of the Local Government Board to issue some compulsory order forbidding the guardians taking the children into the workhouses and compelling them to make some other provision for them.

The next point was what was to be done? There were four ways in which the children could be dealt with. One was to put them in those large schools which still existed; the second to place them in village communities where the houses were grouped together, but where the children lived in separate houses, and attended school, Church, and recreation in common. Then there was the system adopted many years ago by the Sheffield Board of Guardians, to have scattered homes, and the fourth system was boarding out. The one objection to the large schools was that it had been proved by experience that it was impossible to prevent in them epidemic disease, and particularly that scourge of the school, ophthalmia. Every effort, and there had been many, made to put a stop to ophthalmia had failed, and that disease was continually breaking out in these schools. The greatest proof of that was the large institution opened the other day by the right hon. Gentleman for the provision of 360 children suffering from ophthalmia. The treatment which the children received was excellent in every way, but anyone who witnessed the sufferings they endured; who had seen them stagger under the pain of having their eyes sponged out with a painful lotion, necessary though it was for their cure, would regret that such institutions were necessary. In recent times this Committee had come to a unanimous conclusion against the maintenance of these large boarding schools. The one school at Sutton was broken up, and a promise given by the then President of the Local Government Board, the right hon. Member for Sleaford, that no addition should be made to the existing schools. Under those circumstances, he learned with astonishment that it was proposed to extend the accommodation of the school at Hanwell.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. WALTER LONG, Bristol, S.) said that proposal did not emanate from him.

SIR JOHN GORST expressed his satisfaction at the right hon. Gentleman's statement, and said he did not wish in any way to reflect on those who had the management of these institutions and who had been successful in mitigating many of their disadvantages. The village communities were undoubtedly an improvement on the great schools, and he learned with regret that instead of their being restricted to houses where a small number of children were boarded, large blocks were being put up, thus doing away entirely with the good of the village community, and making them like the large schools. It was also said the village communities were costly, but he did not object to them on that ground, because whatever money was spent if the result was good, was money well spent. Then there was the system of scattered homes. He had seen these scattered homes, and, so far as one could judge, a more excellent way of providing for the children not boarded out it was difficult to imagine. Many boards of guardians have imitated the plan, which he believed was better than either the big schools or the village communities. He could not help thinking that the experience of the hon. Member for Woolwich in regard to boarding-out had been rather unfortunate. If the boarding-out system was unsatisfactory, he thought it was rather due to some error of machinery on the part either of the Local Government Board or the local guardians than to any failure in the system itself. In the inquiry of eight years ago, nearly all the members of the Committee came to the conclusion that of all the methods of treating children, that adopted by Dr. Barnardo was by far the most humane and successful. He previously had a strong prejudice against Dr. Barnardo, but, after seeing his institution and having practical experience of his work, he became a complete convert. Dr. Barnardo tried both the institution and the village community systems, but fell back on boarding out the children as being by far the best way of bringing them up. He was not certain about the cost; but he should not think it was so great as that of the large institutions, but, judging by results, it was by far the best system. Whatever system was adopted, he earnestly hoped the President of the Local Government Board would at once turn the children out of the workhouse. As to the desirability of doing that all were agreed. After the evidence given before, and the conclusion arrived at, by the Committee some years ago, it would be a great pity to extend the big school or the village community system. As many as possible should be boarded out, and those who could not be boarded out should be put in scattered homes. The greatest possible deterrent of pauperism was to take the children out of the hands of worthless parents. That was done in New Zealand, and the law had the effect of immediately diminishing the number of persons who became chargeable to the rates.

MR. CAMERON (Durham, Houghton-le-Spring) said that when they considered the large number of children in charge of the State, they could not but feel that it was most desirable that such methods should be used as would save the children from becoming paupers in the future. He believed that if the guardians were urged to do their duty and wise methods were employed, the bulk of the children could be made into useful citizens, and be restored to industrial and normal life. Nearly twenty years of his life had been spent in connection with pauper children, as chairman of a large union in the North, and he believed the best work of his life was that which he did as chairman of the schools connected with that union. The first method they adopted was that of separating the children from the adult paupers; they built schools and engaged separate managers and teachers. Then they endeavoured to improve the physique of the children, who were stolid and dull, having the stamp of the workhouse child upon them. Gymnastic exercises were introduced, and in an industrial school the boys were taught tailoring, shoemaking and other trades. But the best thing they did was to send the children to the public elementary school, giving them a variety of dress so that they should not be marked among the other pupils. The children improved in health and energy; their manner altered, and in a year or two they were like ordinary working men's children. One difficulty which they had to tackle was that of dealing with the girls when they left the workhouse. Many of them were taken by relations, who had been quite content to allow the State to bring them up but who wished to use them for their own purposes when they were able to earn money. Many of the girls, especially in large towns, were in great danger, and some became immoral. It was found that the best thing for the girls' welfare was to send them to Canada, and some hundreds had been sent out. He would like to ask the right hon. Gentleman how far the Local Government Board were now dealing with the question of emigration. With regard to the boarding out, it was necessary to know the character of the parents and the homes, and to be sure that the children would be treated as they should be. In large towns boarding out was not the best system, although it might be in villages where everybody was known. By using such methods as he had described, by taking an interest in the children and by keeping in touch with them by correspondence after they had gone out into the world, he believed the guardians could do good work for the community and for the future.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said the question of the inspection of Poor Law schools had been discussed for a long time, and he noticed that in the present session the President of the Local Government Board had stated that the correspondence with the Education Department had been reopened. It was very awkward from the educational standpoint that the inspection of these schools should be in the hands not of the Education Department, but of the Local Government Board. Nothing could be said in defence of such an arrangement, and he hoped his right hon. friend, among other reforms, would not lose sight of that point. He should be glad if the right hon. Gentleman would give them some assurance that the Report in regard to the disposal of sewage would be speedily presented. The question of the boarding out of children was a subject upon which there was more misunderstanding than upon any other subject connected with the Poor Law. A great many people thought that the barrack school system was responsible for all the mischief upon this question. The barrack schools were condemned; that went without saying; but to involve all these schools in a general condemnation was to make a mistake. Sutton had afforded the worst case; but he understood that that school had been broken up and that the girls' school was now set aside for children suffering from ringworm. It was often said that these Poor Law children were quite dull, but he thought if any Member of the House were to see these boys in the cricket field or in the gymnasium he would agree they were just as pleasant and joyful children as could be found in the whole of London. He never could understand why these children were charged with being specially dull. What was the difficulty the boards of guardians had apart from the Local Government Board? Boarding out had been suggested. Yes; but they had first of all to get their homes. That might be easy enough to do in the rural districts of the country, and he should say that boarding out was the real remedy in those districts; but when they came to deal with the urban districts the difficulty was greater. They had then got to find the homes and the foster parents, and to get a committee to take an interest in these matters was perhaps the greatest difficulty of all. Hon. Members made a great mistake if they thought that the boarding-out system was a delightful thing to undertake. Then there was the religious difficulty to be considered, particularly with regard to Roman Catholic children. They could not board out Roman Catholic children, because that would raise the religious difficulty at once. Having looked into the question most thoroughly, he could say it could only be settled by the establishment of schools of a moderate size, by village communities, by boarding out, and by scattered homes.

The question of scattered homes was rather an interesting one. He should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board what had been the results of the Camberwell experiment. There was an experiment thoroughly tried in a London community, and he desired to know whether it had met with success, and whether the Local Government Board thought the experiment ought to be carried farther. There had been a charge made against the late President of the Local Government Board in allowing additions to the barrack schools. He thought he could say that more than one application had been made to add to those schools, but the late President found himself bound by the Report of the Committee on the subject. It was not the case that any real additions were allowed. What was done was to grant applications for increasing the size of the kitchen department, and applications as regarded expenditure on ventilation were rightly sanctioned. He did not think any application to enlarge the scope of the schools to provide for additional children had been allowed, and he did not think such an application had been granted since the Report was issued. He thought the House was perfectly unanimous that children ought not to be in workhouses at all. They must always bear in mind the difficulties in London, for example. They had in London to deal with an enormous number of ins and outs. A woman or worker arrived with three or four children at the workhouse at night, for instance, and left again in the morning. But they were reckoned as being in the workhouse. Supposing they had receiving houses; they were no good unless they had got places to send them to from the receiving houses. They were bound to have a certain number of these children in because of these ins and outs. All these difficulties could only be appreciated by guardians, and he confessed he had never listened with more pleasure to a speech than to that of Mr. Crooks, the hon. Member for Woolwich, who went practically into the whole question. He believed the guardians were doing their best under difficult circumstances, and he believed the Local Government Board were encouraging the guardians to provide for these children in the best way they could.

MR. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.) said he wished to ask for some information with regard to the administration of the Vaccination Acts. He did not wish at this time to challenge the policy of compulsory vaccination, or to restate the objections to the order of 1898, whereby the boards of guardians were deprived of discretion with regard to prosecutions, recognised for thirty years as almost a statutory power, or to refer to the circular letter issued by the Local Government Board in 1901, which seemed to him to interfere with the discretionary powers of magistrates in dealing with this question. What he wished to raise was two specific issues on which there might be common ground for those who wished good administration, without raising any controversial issues. It seemed to him that the whole scale of fees and charges introduced under the Order of 1898, and by the administration of the Acts by the Local Government Board was enormously high. Before this Order and the other circulars came into effect in 1898, the cost of the vaccination administration by boards of guardians in England and Wales was £72,655. In the following year, after the Act of 1898 was put into operation, the cost was raised to three times that amount—namely, £237,000, and, so far as he could see, it stood at that rate at the present time. The hon. Member for Aberdeenshire might think that the doctors who carried out this administration deserved to be well paid. He would admit that domiciliary vaccination did justify an increase in the expenditure, but with that exception he thought he represented the feelings of many boards of guardians when he said that this enormous growth of expenditure was a matter which deserved the attention of the Local Government Board with a view to reconsideration and revision. He should be glad if the right hon. Gentleman could introduce any suggestions or modifications which would lead to economy in that expenditure.

The second point he wished to raise was this—without raising any question as to the legality or otherwise of the vaccination officer being made absolutely independent of the board of guardians, he wished to point out that the vaccination officer was placed in a position wholly exceptional amongst all the other officers, as far as he knew, of any local authority at the present time. The vaccination officer was under the board of guardians, but received instructions from the Local Government Board which practically gave him a free hand, and this enabled him to defy the authority of the boards of guardians. The Local Government Board might claim that the boards of guardians were not acting within the letter of the law, and therefore the vaccination officer was properly carrying out his duties by resisting his board in matters in which, he submitted, according to the ordinary principles of local government, boards of guardians ought to have some authority and discretionary power over their officials.

The particular case he had been requested to bring before the Committee was that of the Wellingborough Board of Guardians, the principal union in the division he represented. He hoped that question would be considered by the right hon. Gentleman apart from any argument *ad invidiam* from the past. He was not going to raise any question as to the attitude the board might have had at some previous period in regard to the Vaccination Acts. He would deal with the question as it now stood. The board acquiesced in the carrying out of the Acts at the present time. They appointed two vaccination officers—one for a large district and one for a small district. The officer for the smaller district had carried out his duty with vigilance and precise inquiry into the facts. He had brought something like 200 cases before the Courts, and had carried out the whole procedure without imposing on the board of guardians any solicitors' fees whatever. None of the cases brought before the Courts were dismissed, so that whatever expenditure was incurred by the guardians was justified. The officer appointed for the larger district had dealt with some 400 cases in the same period. He had insisted from the first on being accompanied in Court by a solicitor, whereas only in one, or two, or three, or four cases since the commencement of the vaccination prosecutions had the defendants been represented by a solicitor, or had any legal point been raised. By insisting, in the face of repeated protests, on being accompanied by a solicitor, this officer had imposed enormous costs on the board of guardians. In nearly all the cases the solicitor did not require to say a single word in court. The total cost in eighteen months amounted to no less than £431, and up to the present time they amounted to £583, which was equal to a ¾d. rate in the district, and a ½d. rate was actually imposed last year in order to meet these extra charges. Further, with regard, to this vaccination officer no less than ninety-eight cases were dismissed by the Court owing to the omission of inquiries prescribed by the circular of 1901. In some cases the child had died, or the parents had obtained a certificate, or had removed from the district. In these cases the solicitors' charges had to be met, although the dismissal of the cases was due to the neglect of the officer to carry out the regulations. It seemed to him a scandal that these costs should be imposed against the will of the board of guardians and the locality, when there was absolutely no necessity. He was informed that the guardians had offered the officer other advice which could be obtained at a lower cost to the ratepayers. The magistrates were willing to adjourn the hearing of cases in which a defence was offered. He submitted that it was a serious and improper course for the officer to employ a solicitor in circumstances where there was no need whatever for his services. The officer apparently had a perfectly free hand to impose on the ratepayers any expense he chose to incur. It was notorious in the district that the solicitors employed by the officer were not those to whom it would be natural to go. One was a young and inexperienced solicitor, and one had abandoned practice for some time but came back into the district. An offer was made by the officer that he would take the whole thing over himself at 2s. 6d. a case, but very properly the Local Government Board refused to authorise such an arrangement. Were the words in Section 29 of the Order of 1898, which compelled guardians to pay the reasonable costs and expenses of vaccination officers in obtaining legal assistance consistent with the extraordinary proceedings he had described? Some time ago he brought this matter privately before the President of the Local Government Board, and an inspector was sent down to inquire. The result of that inquiry was practically a refusal on the part of the Local Government Board to remove this vaccination officer. In view of the officer's misconduct—he could not use a milder word—he thought it was a scandal that the Local Government Board had not dealt with the case on its merits and asked him to send in his resignation. They require the boards of guardians to appoint officials, and these boards should be required to provide their officials with proper funds to enable them to carry on their legal proceedings in a proper and effective way. But the Act never contemplated that any official should be set up in a position to expend the rates for his own advantage and that of his solicitor friends in this reckless and intolerable way. He hoped his right hon. friend might see his way to do more justice to the people in the union which he represented that day, and that vaccination officers should not be exposed to the danger of corruption.

Mr. WALTER LONG said it might be convenient that he should deal with the question raised by the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down and one or two other points, before he came to the subject which had occupied the attention of the Committee during the greater part of the afternoon. He did not intend to discuss the attitude of the boards of guardians towards vaccination; but in the case to which the hon. Gentleman referred there was no doubt that the vaccination officer did incur unnecessary expense in taking legal advice, when he could probably have dispensed with it. He would, however, remind the hon. Gentlemen that when this officer was appointed he found an accumulation of arrears of work, and since he had been in office he had done his work very well. The number of cases had enormously increased, and there was nothing disclosed in the report of the inspector of any dishonest intention on the part of any member of the board of guardians or of the vaccination officer. The worst that could be alleged against him was that he had not sufficient confidence in himself or in the legal advice given to him. The matter, however, was to form the subject of local inquiry; and therefore, he would say nothing more about it now, except that he had seen nothing in the case to justify him in removing the officer from his position, though he had indicated to him, through the inspector, the way in which he thought he might do his work in the future, not less successfully, but at less cost to the guardians.

With regard to the question of death certification, he entirely agreed that it was a subject with which it would be well to deal if it were possible. He did not think the facts were quite so alarming as the hon. Gentleman the Member for Ilkeston would have the Committee believe; but none the less the subject was a very serious one; he should be very glad if he could see his way to legislation. The difficulties of dealing with the question were, however, of a serious and practical character. Very shortly after he came into office he had the advantage of prolonged communications with Sir William Turner, Sir Dyce Duckworth, and with the Registrar-General and his advisers, who speak with singular authority on this and other questions. The Registrar-General was impressed with the desirability of doing something in certain selected localities, but the difficulty was that in many counties there was no medical officer. The practical difficulty was that if the proposals of the Bill which was prepared in 1894 were enforced, not only would very considerable additional expense be incurred, but very considerable difficulties in the indefinite and altogether undesirable postponement of burial would probably result. The matter, however, had been engaging his attention, and if he saw his way to an amendment of the law which would be practicable and would carry out what they all desired, the hon. Gentleman might rely upon it that he would not fail to do his best to carry it through.

Turning to the question which had formed the main subject of debate, he was glad the Committee had devoted its time to the discussion of a question which went so deep to the root of our national life, because there was no doubt that the steps we took now to train and educate the children of the poor must have a lasting effect upon the nation. He had found himself in agreement with a great deal that had been said that afternoon. His right hon. friend the Member for Cambridge University said that notwithstanding they were all agreed that children ought to be taken out of the workhouse, there were more children in the workhouses in London now than when the Committee reported. Figures were more than usually deceptive in this case. As a matter of fact, the number of children in the workhouses varied enormously from year to year, and even from month to month; and if the Committee would put aside the mere comparison of figures, and would look at what had lately been done both in the Metropolis and in the provinces, he thought they would see that real efforts had been made by boards of guardians to deal effectively with this difficulty. His right hon. friend the Member for Cambridge University said he hoped the Local Government Board would issue an order compelling the guardians to take all children out of the workhouses; but he did not think the Local Government Board could do a worse thing, in the interests of good administration, than to attempt to drive the guardians in that way. The boards of guardians in London and the provinces had made great strides during the last twenty-five years, and they deserved not only gratitude but commendation for the work they had done; but if we attempted to drive them all of a sudden into a course which would involve so complete a change, and of so expensive a character, it would not advance the cause of Poor Law administration. They were all agreed that children should be taken out of the workhouses and dealt with in another way; but the great difficulty was found in selecting another way of dealing with them. One hon. Gentleman advocated an extension of the boarding-out system, and urged that it should be simplified and made more comprehensive. By the Act of 1899 guardians were given power to deal with deserted children; but he thought they should proceed very carefully when it was proposed to board out children who had both parents or one parent living. There was a danger of interference by the parents of the child with the foster parents. He hoped, however, to be able to extend the boarding-out order, so as to enable boards of guardians to board out children more freely than they could do now.

It had been said that, notwithstanding the promise made by his right hon. friend the Member for Sleaford, additions to these large Poor Law institutions had been sanctioned by the Local Government Board. That was a complete misapprehension. It was true that in some cases when the necessity arose for the improvement of the existing accommodation that improvement had been sanctioned; but he believed he was right in saying that in every such case the number of children accommodated had been reduced. Therefore, so far from its being true that the Local Government Board had sanctioned an actual increase in the number of children accommodated, the reverse had been the case; and the Local Government Board had taken advantage of every application to impress on the guardians the necessity of reducing the number of children accommodated in those schools. Surely where buildings were in existence, and where there was a heavy local expenditure, it was impossible immediately to force upon the guardians a fresh expenditure; but when the guardians had come to the Department with practical proposals they had taken advantage of the application to reduce the number of children. In so doing they were loyally keeping the pledge given by his right hon. friend. The boarding out, cottage homes, scattered homes, and barrack systems had been referred to. He confessed he thought the barrack system had been a little hardly dealt with, but it was too late to take that view now. They were tried and were condemned, and in the case of the great Sutton schools had already been broken up. When the guardians now made proposals for dealing with their children, the Department never lost an opportunity of recommending them to adopt the cottage home or the boarding-out system. But the guardians were in possession of the facts of the case as well as the Department, and it was for them to make proposals. If those proposals appeared to depart from the principles that had been laid down, the Department insisted on their alteration. There was no doubt great truth in the remarks of the hon. Member for Woolwich. The boarding-out system was only superior when they got good foster-mothers and a very active and energetic committee. He had had before him cases where the boarding-out system was as bad and unsatisfactory as anything they could find in a barrack school or any other form of accommodation. A great deal depended on the locality. In some parts of the country it was comparatively easy to get plenty of foster parents of the right sort; but in other parts of the country it was extremely difficult. In each case the guardians must be governed by their own local knowledge, and what they believed to be best in the interests of the poor, and also in the interests of the ratepayers, whose trustees they were. But the Department would do their best to guide and help them to carry out what Parliament had practically decided they should do—namely, that they should not keep their children in the workhouses, but should provide for them in establishments outside.

As to the Hollymount School, that was not a Poor Law school, it was a religious institution certified by the Local Government Board, and thus enabled to take in children sent by boards of guardians. He entirely agreed that the condition of things that had existed there was extremely unsatisfactory and much to be regretted. It was extremely unsatisfactory that such a condition of things as had been described should have existed at the Hollymount School as long as it did without having been discovered by the inspector. Nothing would have justified him in declining to renew the certificate if he had satisfied himself that there was a complete change both in the system of management and in the general conditions of the school. What were the conditions which he imposed upon the school. He insisted on an entire alteration of the management, on the appointment of a committee of seven, that the majority of the sisters should be English, and that there should be a thoroughly satisfactory dietary. He had also given instructions that the school should be periodically visited and that Returns should be made to the Local Government Board. He could assure the Committee that nothing would have induced him to issue a fresh certificate if he and his advisers were not satisfied that there had been a complete change in the management and general arrangements of the school, which would make it, not only probable, but as certain, humanly speaking, as anything could be, that the future conduct of the school and the care of the children would be altogether different from the disgraceful state of things which had prevailed before. As to the educational inspection of Poor Law schools, they had always been in favour of the transference of this work to the Board of Education. He hoped he should succeed in advancing the matter a little further very soon, and no difficulty should be raised as far as his Department was concerned. He was sorry to say the Sewage Commission was still sitting; it had been sitting a very long time. They had no power over Royal Commissions, but hoped the Commission would present its Report as quickly as possible. He hoped it might reach the ears of the Royal Commission that there had been anxious enquiries regarding it in the House; and that might induce it to present its Report as early as possible. With reference to the Camberwell Homes they had only been in existence three years; and that was too short a time in which to form a definite conclusion as to the result that was expected to flow from them. All the reports which had reached him, however, led him to believe that it was a very satisfactory experiment, and that it would give favourable results. He had now dealt with the various questions which had been raised by hon. Gentlemen, and he would only repeat, speaking for himself and also for his Department, that nothing should be wanting on their part to improve the condition of children depending on the Poor Law, an improvement which they all desired to see. They would do everything they could in conjunction with boards of guardians, who were also anxious to improve the condition of things, to secure that the number of children in workhouses should, as far as practicable, be reduced to the lowest possible number; and they would do their best to secure that the provision made for those children should be the best and most humane that could be obtained. He could assure the Committee that he would do all he could to advance the cause they had all so much at heart.

THE SPEED OF MOTOR CARS.

*MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland) said the state of the highways, owing to the manner in which motor cars were driven, was a question of extreme urgency. It was common knowledge that the Local Government Board was not attempting to take the slightest interest in the great problem which was presented. Question after Question had been asked with regard to continual abuses of the law, and the necessity for fresh regulations had been urged, but they had been met with indifference. The question was of great importance to the whole country. In many places in Scotland, for instance, the children of the poor had been accustomed to play in the streets from time immemorial, having no other playground The right hon. Gentleman had the power of control——

MR. WALTER LONG: How?

*MR. CATHCART WASON said the Act passed a few years ago gave the right hon. Gentleman power to enforce a limit of speed.

*MR. CATHCART WASON said the Act passed a few years ago gave the right hon. Gentleman power to enforce a limit of speed. The present law, he contended, threw the whole responsibility on the right hon. Gentleman and his Department in this matter, and they did nothing, and attempted to do nothing. To those who took any interest in it, this was a most important matter, and they were justified in bringing this grievance before the Committee. If the right hon. Gentleman had, as he said, no information as to the casualties, it was his own fault, because he must have seen what a number of casualties there were if he took the slightest interest in his morning paper. The public looked to the right hon. Gentleman and to their own local authorities for protection in this matter; but, while the local authorities did everything they could, the action of the right hon. Gentleman impeded and hindered them in every way. The present position was that a few people claimed the right to build cars of enormous weight and speed and to monopolise the public roads for the running of those cars. They claimed the right to drive the public off the roads. Harmless men, women, and children, dogs, and cattle, had all got to fly for their lives at the bidding of one of these slaughtering, stinking engines of iniquity. He could not be accused of electioneering, as he believed there was not a motor-car in the whole of his constituency, but he could assure the right hon. Gentleman that a strong feeling of irritation was growing up in country districts at the fact that, owing to his inaction, apathy, and carelessness, these cars were monopolising the whole of their public roads. He did not complain that these persons sought to amuse themselves and to gratify a satiated and vitiated palate by trying to come into as close contact with death as possible, but he did complain most bitterly that they should seek to gratify their taste at the expense of the general public. If these people wished to race they should build tracks for themselves, and not use the public roads for that purpose. The law was on the side of those who protested against this practice, and all that they wanted was that the law should be faithfully and honestly administered. He desired to move to reduce the salary of the right hon. Gentleman by £100, as a protest against his want of action in this matter.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item A (Salaries) be reduced by £100, in respect of the Salary of the President of the Board."—(*Mr. Cathcart Wason.*)

MR. HARWOOD (Bolton) said he supported the Motion of his hon. friend, though he did not enter into all his feelings on the subject. His experience had led him to the conclusion that something more ought to be done than was done to regulate the speed of motor-cars. He timed the speed of the car on which he was travelling the other day, and, though it was no business of his, he found it was going at over thirty miles an hour. Car after car was racing along the same road, palpitating, throbbing, and turning the whole of the thoroughfare into chaos and confusion. It was unjust. This was not a matter of motorists and non-motorists. It was a question of the common right of citizens. A man could not take his family for a walk along the roads within a distance of thirty or forty miles of London with either comfort or safety. The danger was a very real one, but quite apart from the danger the inconvenience arising from the existing state of things was extremely great. This thing must be stopped. It was not a matter of wild shrieking, but it must be remembered that, after all, a motor was the luxury of a few, who could take their pleasures in many other ways. To people in poorer circumstances the avenues of pleasure were limited, and the time had come when the rich should be pulled up. Two thousand years ago it became necessary to restrain Roman heroes from racing in the streets of Rome because it was a public nuisance, and this matter had become a public nuisance, not in one street of one great city, but in every road and lane in the country. The many ought not to be thrust on one side for the few. The law in this particular respect was being brought into complete contempt, and that in itself was a very dangerous thing. The right hon. Gentleman, although, as he understood, he had the power to do so, had not taken any precaution to identify motor-cars.

MR. WALTER LONG was understood to say that he had no power without legislation to require the numbering of motor-cars.

MR. HARWOOD said he understood that under the Act the right hon. Gentleman had power to regulate the traffic, and somebody ought to have the power to identify the cars. It was simply absurd to expect the police to check the speed of the cars as they rushed along one after the other. Their roads were not meant for racing tracks, and if the owners of the motor-cars wanted racing tracks they ought to build them themselves. Perhaps the Government could do with motor-cars as was done with certain other conveyances, viz., restrict them to travelling between the hours of six o'clock in the evening and six o'clock in the morning. In his own business he had an instrument called a recorder, and he would suggest that motor-cars should be compelled to carry a certain machine by which would be recorded not only the number of miles they had travelled but also the distance covered in each hour. This could be inspected by an official, and if excessive speed were shown for any particular hour a penalty might be imposed. He believed that some such system would check the speed. In any case, a means of identifying motors ought to be devised.

*MR. SCOTT MONTAGU (Hampshire, New Forest) said he condemned reckless driving and motor-racing on roads except where authorised by special Act of Parliament. He did not object to identification, which, he thought, was a practical remedy. Last year he introduced a Bill on behalf of the motoring community which provided for identification, and gave the Local Government Board power to make regulations for the control of motor-cars. He proposed to bring in another Bill of a similar character on an early day. He understood that the President of the Local Government Board was also having a Bill prepared. A great deal of the legislation which had been passed on this subject had been legislation passed in a hurry. He therefore asked the Committee not to be carried away by what he admitted was the strong feeling of the public at present against motoring in general. He thought the speed now authorised in towns was too great in some cases, but in his opinion the present hard and fast limit of twelve miles an hour in town and country alike was ridiculous. If they could trust people not to use their speed where it would be an annoyance, there would be very little outcry on behalf of the public. Unfortunately a good many people with powerful machines did not use them wisely, and he hoped they would be caught and properly dealt with. The fact that children played in the roads in villages should not, however, be used as an argument against motoring in general, because, primarily, the roads were intended for vehicles. It was not fair also to say that motor-cars were only the luxury of the rich. A great number of cars were being constructed at prices ranging from £100 to £150, and they eventually would be used by the class of people who now used small pony carts or dogcarts. A few years hence the motor-car would be the best friend of the poor man, because in towns it would greatly assist in the solution of the housing problem, and in the country it would provide a means of communication between villages and railway stations. He hoped that the Government would give facilities for the passing of the Bill which he proposed to introduce. If the right hon. Gentleman brought in a Bill he hoped it would provide for identification, and would at the same time remove the twelve miles an hour speed limit. That limit led to reckless driving, because when a motorist could break the law by travelling fourteen miles an hour he thought he might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb and went at a far higher speed. Possibly the difficulty might be met by having safe spheres and dangerous spheres with a speed limit for the latter.

*SIR H. MEYSEY-THOMPSON (Staffordshire, Handsworth) could not agree that identification was all that was necessary. He had spent the Whitsuntide recess in the country, and there he found in the minds of most people a feeling of great exasperation against motor-cars. This feeling was not confined to farmers, but extended to solicitors, doctors, and business men generally. The cars were driven in the most reckless manner, and frequently by women. Some of them might be experienced drivers, but many of them were not, and to see dangerous engines, for as such he regarded them, driven at high speed by beginners was too trying for the nerves of ordinary people. Identification was not enough; the speed must be limited. They desired not only to punish the people who did damage, but to protect persons who used the roads in the ordinary way. Cars were being built which could easily be run at the rate of sixty miles an hour: probably few Members realised what the speed of a train going sixty miles an hour was like when looked at from outside the train. He had himself taken great interest in the speed of trains, and had often stood to watch the passage of trains at high speed. Anyone who would take the trouble to do that would realise at once that, if motor-cars were allowed to be driven at anything like that rate, they must have a monopoly of the road. Motor-cars might very likely be driven properly when the responsible owners were in them, but, as in the case of horses and carriages, the trouble arose when they were empty, and the driver had no one to interfere with recklessness consequent on his desire to get home quickly. Was there to be no restraint on *chauffeurs* who went thirty, fifty, or even sixty miles an hour, except the fear of penalty if they did any actual damage? They would very likely do no damage because, if these speeds were allowed, no one else would dare to use the road, except in fear and trembling, and everything would have to get out of their way. Did the public wish that the roads should be given up entirely to motors, or did they wish that motors were to be allowed to take their place among the ordinary traffic, on the condition that they were not driven at rates of speed which must inevitably interfere with the ordinary use of the road by ordinary people? It had been said that motor-cars would eventually drive horses and carriages off the roads altogether, but meanwhile he thought they were entitled to use the roads in decent comfort and safety.

MR. NUSSEY (Pontefract) said he wished to protest against the great speed at which motor-cars were driven. He thought the danger would be increased and not decreased when motor-cars came more generally into use, and he urged the right hon. Gentleman to meet this danger in time. It had been suggested that there should be a sphere of danger and another sphere of comparative safety, but he thought those in the danger sphere would have a very bad time indeed. It was no use being able to recognise the number of a motor-car after they had been nearly killed, and the only effective way to deal with the question was to make cars illegal which ran at more than about fifteen or twenty miles an hour, or whatever speed was fixed as reasonable. He hoped something of this kind would be done, otherwise what was now a great nuisance might become a great danger.

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said he did not propose to vote for the reduction of the right hon. Gentleman's salary, because he did not believe that he had omitted to do anything which he could have done in this matter. He thought, however, that something should be done to stop what he believed was a growing evil. He did not object to motor-cars because they belonged to rich people. The real question was that the roads of England were made for the people, and they should not be monopolised by a certain section, no matter whether they belonged to the poor or the rich. It appeared that no sooner did a motor-car cause an accident than, instead of stopping to assist, the car drove off just as if nothing had happened. An hon. Member told him that his servant was driving a dogcart along the road when a motor-car passed, and the horse shied and got nearly over the hedge. Although there were five men in the motor-car it never stopped to give the slightest assistance to the man in charge of the dogcart, although there was no one else with him. Some means ought to be taken to stop that kind of thing. He also agreed that excess of speed should also be stopped. They should not allow anything to run at express speed along a road which was meant for people walking and driving. They could not take even a dog out without the danger of its being run over. If a reasonable speed of, say, fifteen miles an hour was in force he did not think there would be any interference with the motor-car industry. If people continued to use the roads like railway lines, to travel at sixty miles an hour, then the Government should do something to stop what was a very serious matter.

Mr. SEELY (Lincoln) said that although he agreed that there should be some means of identification, he could not agree with some of the proposals which had been made with regard to speed. He thought three-quarters of their difficulties were due to having fixed the speed, because whenever they fixed a maximum it had a tendency to become the minimum. Twelve miles an hour might be too quick to travel in some parts of the country, but there were some roads where they could see seven or eight miles ahead, and he thought everybody would acknowledge that twelve miles an hour was a ridiculous speed upon such a road. He did not think anybody with a fast pair of horses would drive along a road like that without exceeding that speed. He had every confidence in the magistrates and authorities in country districts, and it should be left to them to decide in regard to furious driving. If this were done, the motor-car industry and the safety of the public would be in a much better position. They did not want to check the motor-car industry; and any one who noticed how motor-cars were going, and how convenient they were as a means of intercommunication away from main lines of railway, and how very much they added to the power of getting from place to place, could not doubt that they would be a very great addition to the power of production in this country. If this attack on the motor-car industry led to legislation which would check that industry, it would only cause it to increase in other countries, and in that way very serious harm would be done to this country.

Mr. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.) expressed the hope that in any legislation the Government introduced the right hon. Gentleman would be fully cognisant of the enormous importance this industry was likely to assume. Motor-cars had come to stay, and would develop into an enormous industry in this country. Nevertheless, he thought motor-car drivers should be licensed, and they ought to be examined and obtain a certificate before being entrusted with the driving of a motor-car. He thought if a certificate had been insisted on in the past, many of the accidents which had taken place never would have occurred. He hoped the Local Government Board would take that important matter into consideration in any Bill they might introduce.

Mr. SPEAR (Devonshire, Tavistock) said that feeling in his constituency was very strong. The hon. Member below him had appealed to the House not to do anything that would check the motor-car industry, but he wished to remind the Committee that motor-cars were checking another great industry, and that was the production of horses. What they felt in country districts was, that if a man drove a horse furiously he was at once punished for it, and the same law ought to apply to motor cars.

And, it being half-past Seven of the Clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress ; to sit again this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

SUPPLY [12TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee :—

(In the Committee.)

[MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

CLASS II.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £136,907, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Local Government Board."

Whereupon Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item A (Salaries) be reduced by £100, in respect of the Salary of the President of the Board."—(*Mr. Cathcart Wason.*)

MR. SPEAR, continuing his speech when the House resumed, said he desired to point out that a waggoner who drove his waggon without reins was amenable to the law, as was the farmer whose waggon was found in the road without the name being legible on it, although these offences were not half so dangerous to life and limb as a motor-car, which ought to be amenable to the same law. It had been suggested that the speed limit should be entirely removed, and that compensation should be paid for damage caused by furious driving. That was a proposal with which he had no sympathy. Any compensation that was paid for the death of a bread-winner was very poor indeed. He submitted that it would be an extremely dangerous thing to do away with the speed limit. Stock which was being removed from one field to another was in danger from motor-cars. It seemed to be assumed by motorists that they could safely ride at greater speed in the country districts than in towns, but that was not the case, because horses in towns were more used to motor-cars than in country districts. If a car were travelling at great speed, there was no time to get out and hold the horse's head, or take any steps to prevent it taking fright. His constituency would not be satisfied unless the twelve-mile limit of speed was retained, and the cars were so numbered as to be easily identified. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman, in the Bill foreshadowed, would take care to protect the interests of pedestrians and all users of the roads. It was unfair that motorists should endanger the roads for those who had hitherto maintained them.

MR. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple) said this was a question of the most serious character, and he was in entire agreement with all that had been said by the hon. Member for Tavistock, and in order to give the hon. Member an opportunity of supporting his observations by his vote, he would support a reduction of the Vote by £100. He lived in the same county as the hon. Gentleman The roads in that county were extremely narrow, and therefore the regulation of motor-cars was a most important question. No one would deny that the present position of things was extremely unsatisfactory. The law, as it existed, was broken by everybody, from the Prime Minister downwards. A motorist seemed to think he could go at any pace he liked so long as he could escape a fine. There was no demand on the part of trades which availed themselves of the use of motor-cars for any increase in the speed limit. The only agitation came from people who motored for pleasure. The speed limit should, in his opinion, be the same all over the country, except that it might, perhaps, be relaxed on some of the great roads. There was an immense amount of difference between horse locomotion and motor locomotion. With motor driving there was only one brain to depend upon, but in horse driving there were two. In the case of two men who had dined not wisely but too well, the one who went home in a motor had to depend upon himself, and the course he took in the circumstances assumed might be of a very peculiar character; but the man who went home in a trap had not only his own brain but that of his horse to depend upon, and there were many steady old horses which could not be induced to run on the wrong side of the road, when a vehicle had to be passed, however hard the wrong rein was pulled. He looked upon the motor craze as a most dangerous form of amusement. He thought the President of the Local Government Board would only be doing his duty to the public if he took prompt steps to protect those who used the public roads, and for whom the roads were originally made.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington) desired to emphasise the necessity of registration. Of course it was a difficult matter, but there were one or two points which had not been brought forward which might have overcome any difficulty in the way of registration. The other day a man he knew very well was riding out on his horse when a motor-car passed and the horse shied. The rider was thrown on to the pavement. Two men from the car carried him into his house and then got into the car again and went on, refusing to give their names. The injured man was dead in less than an hour. Such a case showed that it was absolutely necessary that some legislation should be framed in regard to the registration of motor-cars. He would like to advocate that certificates should be issued to the drivers of motor-cars. There were only a few men in the country at the present time, expert cyclists, who could drive motors with safety at the rate of sixty miles an hour. He was not in favour of a time limit. He believed it was impossible satisfactorily to fix a time limit, and he believed it was impossible to fix a time limit which would be satisfactory to the people of the country. As one who had had some experience of living within thirty miles of London, he testified that the motor-car was at present a great nuisance to the vast majority of the people of this country. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would bring in a measure to deal with the matter at an early date.

SIR BRAMPTON GURDON (Norfolk, N.) said he was in agreement with the hon. Member for Lincoln, and believed the time limit to be a mistake. A fixed speed was apt to be regarded as a minimum speed. He thought the best course would be to apply the same rules to motor-cars as to other vehicles with regard to furious driving and the rule of the road. He was at perfect liberty if he were riding a horse, and was the only person in the road, to gallop as hard as he liked, but if he were to drive through a market town at ten or even eight miles an hour he would be very soon hauled up. He quite agreed as to the intelligence of a horse. Whenever he went to social and political gatherings, which were very tiring, he always went on horseback, because when they were over he could always get on his horse and go comfortably to sleep and be taken safely home. He did not know whether it was because *chauffeurs* were often foreigners, but motor-cars seemed to be always on the wrong side of the road. He hoped to see all motor-cars numbered in very large and plain figures, and licences required for drivers. Fines were no deterrent to rich owners, and he hoped that the magistrates would impose not merely fines, but terms of imprisonment on those who infringed the law.

*GENERAL LAURIE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest) said it did not appear to him a very logical proceeding to move the reduction of the right hon. Gentleman's salary because he proposed to bring in a Bill to deal with this matter. What he had been struck by most was the fact that motor-car drivers apparently had the idea that they were a privileged body entitled to do what no other person was entitled to do. Other people recognised that they had to meet the elements up to the speed of a horse, but the occupants of motor-cars started out with goggles and mask, as a preparation for the high speed they proposed to travel, thus deliberately breaking the law. All vehicles should be made to comply with the same rule. It was necessary, too, that there should be some power of arresting offenders; it was no use summoning a man who had given a false name and address. He knew of a case where a constable had noticed a car travelling in the Regent's Park at a great pace, and in four minutes it came round again. He stopped the car and asked the occupant if he knew that he had travelled three miles in four minutes. "Yes," was the answer, "I was just trying to see what my motor could do." The constable took the name and address of the occupant of the motor-car and summoned him, and it was found that both name and address were false. What was the use of that? Unless some means were found of regulating motor-cars they would arouse general hate. We were told already that nails were put on the roads to puncture the tyres. The *chauffeur* did not care for the rule of the road; he sounded his horn and expected everyone to get out of the way. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would take care that motor-cars were obliged to conform to the same rules as other vehicles which used the roads.

*MR. THEODORE TAYLOR (Lancashire, Radcliffe) said motor-cars as at present driven were a danger to the public, particularly children and those who were crippled or deaf. Deaf people, in his opinion, had as much right to live as people who were not deaf. It was not a rich or a poor person's question. It was a question between those who for the time being had command of artificial power, and those who had animals or worked their own vehicles or who travelled on foot. Restrictions should affect motor bicycles as well. There was a temptation, no doubt, to go at a great speed because it was so easy to attain that speed by turning a handle. He was sorry to read that the President of the Local Government Board had said that there should be no limit to speed. He could not see any reason for such a remark. People in country districts needed protection as well as those in towns. There should be speed limit everywhere. Exceptions might be made in open roads where they could see a mile ahead, but in ordinary roads there was as much necessity for speed limit for motor-cars as there was for horses and vehicles. Motor-cars he believed had come to stay, and he admitted they had many advantages. They quickened transit, and they all hoped that in the future they would play a very great part in taking agricultural produce to market, but there was no necessity for enormous speed. In country lanes where there was no path to get out of the way a motor-car driving at great speed would be very dangerous to old men who were deaf. They ought not to place people in danger because they were deaf, or crippled, or old. He was not an enemy to motor-cars, but he believed that they were the truest friends of their use who desired to place restrictions upon their speed.

*MR. BULL (Hammersmith) said he had been a motorist for some years, and he had never yet been fined. He was convinced that the future of the motor industry in England depended upon the nature of the restrictions placed on the use of the cars. The question of speed limit must be very carefully considered indeed. He was in favour of abolishing the speed limit altogether. It would be remembered that when bicycles first became popular there was a similar outcry as to their speed. He believed the Thames Conservancy had always declined to lay down a speed for launches. The responsibility as to what was safe was the business of the owner and engineer. If they put the same responsibility on the person driving a car as to what was safe in town or country then he believed that with heavy penalties for reckless driving they would have the true solution of this difficulty. In what had appeared in the Press lately on the question of speed, forty miles an hour had been referred to as quite an ordinary speed for motor cars to travel. He could assure the Committee that that was quite an exceptional speed for motors. An hon. Member had spoken of motors travelling at sixty miles an hour. He ventured to say that very few motorists ever dared to travel at a speed of that kind. He was in favour of cars being marked either behind or on the side for identification. He believed that motors were going to revolutionise the trade of the country. He believed their use would solve some of the difficulties in regard to housing, and the taking of farm produce, especially dairy produce, from farms into towns. A Departmental Committee on Highways of which he had the honour to be a member was now sitting considering, among other things, this very question. It was difficult to realise that there had been no great new highways made in England for a hundred years providing communication between one town and another. This question was being considered with the view of seeing whether any alterations and additions should be made in regard to highways, looking to the changes which had taken place in the methods of locomotion. He did not think the proper regulation of motor car traffic could be obtained by fixing a limit of speed. He firmly believed the solution of the difficulty was to be found in refusing to lay down a limit altogether.

MR. CAWLEY (Lancashire, Prestwich) said that in his opinion for the safety of the public twelve miles an hour was quite fast enough for a motor-car. When dealing with the question as to the difficulty children had in getting out of the way of motor-cars, an hon. Gentleman said that children had no prescriptive right to claim the road. Every child going along the road to school had as much right to the road as the rich man in his motor-car. There were many villages where the doors of cottages opened directly on to the road, and to travel past these doors at high speed was most dangerous. Because a few wealthy men liked to use the roads for sport the general public ought not to be endangered.

MR. MURRAY (Coventry) said it appeared to him that some of the hon. Members who had taken part in the debate had a fixed and rooted objection to the whole system of motor-cars generally. The attitude they took up did nothing to promote a solution of the questions which had been raised as to use of the cars. He earnestly joined in the appeal to the President of the Local Government Board to introduce useful legislation on this subject. An enormous industry was represented by motor-cars, and he believed there was a great future before it. Motor-cars had come to stay, and it must be borne in mind that they had not yet reached the highest point of utility in a commercial way. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not be led astray by suggestions as to extreme speed limits; it would be far better to leave it to magistrates to say what was dangerous to the public.

MR. CHARLES ALLEN (Gloucestershire, Stroud) said he was not at all sure that he was in favour of legislation to limit the rate of speed, for the reason that he did not see how they were going to carry it out. What he did think should be done if this motor-car industry was to progress in the country was to cultivate a better feeling among those who used motor-cars. He thought the Automobile Club could do a considerable amount in that way. Everyone must have had experience of what he must call the bad manners of those who drove in motor-cars. Only yesterday in Gloucester Road he saw an old gentleman with the greatest difficulty escape a motor-car. Instead of receiving any sympathy from the motor-car driver he was abused. In his own case he had been driving a young horse when a motor-car came along, and when he nearly put the animal into a ditch the driver of the car only laughed. In another case a little girl was out leading a dog. A motor-car came along and killed the dog, and the driver went on paying no attention to what had happened. These instances showed how motor-car driving became unpopular. He thought motor-car drivers should be certificated. He understood that it was exceedingly difficult to drive straight at a high speed. There should be on all cars a ready means of identification.

*MR. FITZROY (Northamptonshire, S.) expressed the hope that the President of the Local Government Board would deal with this matter at the earliest opportunity. He had received several letters from members of his constituency asking him to press the matter. Many people approached this subject with a deep-seated antipathy to motor-cars. But he did not associate himself with these.

He believed that motors were an invention of great importance and had a great future before them for the public good. At the same time he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would frame laws which in the main they would be able to carry out and which the magistrates would be able to enforce. As the law stood with regard to limitation of speed, it was impossible to carry it out. There was no good in putting a limit of speed on motor-cars if they allowed them to run at all. As it was, unless they were personally acquainted with the driver or knew him by sight, it was impossible to identify him, or bring home to him any damage he might have done. Registration and numbering of motor-cars was the way of getting over these difficulties. He hoped therefore that this appeal from the Committee would strengthen the right hon. Gentleman's hand in bringing in a Bill which would have the effect of making the roads safe for all who might use them.

MR. LOUIS SINCLAIR (Essex, Romford) said that a time limit was absurd, because all that the motor-car driver had to do when he saw a policeman in the distance was just to touch a small switch, and the speed of the car was immediately eased, making it impossible for the policeman to tell really what the speed was. The man who drove recklessly to the common danger of the public was a man to be punished. That was the common sense of the whole thing, and to reach that desirable end care must be taken that it was easy to identify the car and the motorist. Cars should never turn corners at a high speed. But on a clear road a car could surely go more than twelve miles an hour without causing danger. With a time limit there was always conflicting evidence. A policeman had come into collision with his motor-car—(laughter)—he meant that a policeman declared that his car was travelling at a greater speed than twelve miles an hour, and had nearly knocked him down. The magistrate dismissed the case against him, especially when he told his honour what his name was, and that his address was "The House of Commons." The policeman imagined that he was wishing to conceal his address, but the magistrate said that a better address could not have been given. [Laughter] He could assure hon. Members who seemed to be amused, that he was not trying to hide himself behind his address in the House of Commons. He wished to call the attention of his right hon. friend to the great danger which arose from some car drivers using excessive lighting on the road. It was not necessary to have these tremendous lights; they were not useful to the driver if he went at a reasonable speed at night. They had heard of a horse being frightened by a car and hanging with its fore legs on one side of a hedge, and its hind legs on the other side; but such an event was an exception. Personally, he had had varied experience in driving his car in his own constituency. On one occasion he happened to pass a carriage containing a lady, and he at once stopped, as the horse appeared to be frightened. He got out of his car and led the horse safely past, and he had had the hearty support of the lady ever since. On another occasion he was nearly assaulted by a gentleman, who said that he was going at a highly dangerous speed.

There was a good deal of misconception in regard to motor-cars, and he was glad that the right hon. Gentleman was going to introduce a Bill on the subject, because he was sure that the right hon. Gentleman himself had driven a motor-car at a higher speed than thirty miles an hour. It was an anomaly that the right hon. Gentleman should introduce a Bill, and that another Department would have the duty of enforcing it when passed into law. That drove him to the conclusion that there ought to be a revision of the work of all the Departments. The motor-car industry was one of the most important in the country. Millions had been spent abroad for cars which might have been spent here. Then there was the important question of car transport in the army. They were only at the commencement of a very big industry, but he did not think that the future of motor-cars meant that horses would be useless, or that the value of horses would go down in consequence. Farmers who found it impossible at present to convey their produce to market, owing to the excessive railway rates, ought to hail with pleasure the fact that cheap transport could be provided by means of motor-cars. If the industry was crippled by laws which were based on prejudice, it would have the effect of compelling people to obtain their cars from abroad, and would throw this country back many years. As it was, we were behind other nations in utilising motor-cars for many purposes. He was rather sceptical as to whether his right hon. friend would be able to introduce his Bill this Session; but when it was introduced, he hoped that it would not contain any limitation of speed, but embrace regulations as to lights, and penalties on those who had not the courage to stop when they had had an accident. A motor-car was by no means the dangerous thing sometimes imagined. A good deal had been said about cars running over dogs. He had been most unlucky in running over one or two dogs, but he had never killed one yet. If the law were sensibly amended he was certain that it would give a fillip to the motor-car industry, benefit the country, and bring us up to the same level as other nations.

MR. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.) said he should be very sorry if the horse-breeding industry in Ireland was injured by the extension of the use of motor-cars. He expected, however, a great deal of benefit from the introduction of motor-cars into Ireland for the purpose of carrying agricultural produce. In large towns and cities horses soon got accustomed to engines and motor-cars; but it should not be forgotten that undoubtedly great dangers were to be feared in country districts to horses and other animals who were not accustomed to the motor-cars. Motor-cars should be numbered, and the police should have the same power over them as they possessed over the ordinary Irish horse-car, which bore the name and address of the owner. An hon. Gentleman had said that the police would not be able to find out whether a car was going at an excessive speed; but he undertook to say that, now that the police were to be reduced in Ireland, if they brought over here Irish policemen, they would very soon find out whether the speed was excessive or not. He was certainly opposed to the driving of motor-cars at an excessive speed.

MR. WALTER LONG said that before approaching the absorbing topic which the Committee had now been discussing, he desired to say a word or two in regard to two subjects introduced in the early part of the afternoon. The hon. Member for Woolwich asked him whether he had announced his intention of abolishing Boards of Guardians, and to transfer their administration to other local bodies. He had never made any statement of the kind. He believed the misunderstanding was due to some general remarks on the subject of local government, in which he had indicated his opinion that the way to strengthen and economise local government was to reduce the number of local bodies; but he never suggested or contemplated the abolition of Boards of Guardians, which were a special and distinct branch of local administration. An hon. Gentleman had asked him about the administration of out-door relief, but that did not come within the purview of his administrative Department. He wished to say that he had made no attack on the Royal Commission on the Disposal of Sewage. He had suggested that they had been, perhaps, a little too long in making their Report; but he had also said that they had made a very valuable interim Report, and that had given him reason to believe that the members of the Commission were much interested in the great and serious problems connected with sewage, and that they were not to blame for any delay in the presentation of their final Report. He now came to the very important question which they had been discussing for the last three or four hours. The Motor-Car Question was important for more reasons than one. Last year there was a Debate upon it, and the right hon. Member for Sleaford suggested that there should be legislation, and he was supported by several Members. Before that Debate he believed that there was very considerable opposition in many quarters of the House to any Bill dealing with motor-cars in a comprehensive manner. He was surprised at the reception which that remark met with in the House. In his reply, after pointing out certain difficulties which surrounded the Question, he said—

> "I am very glad indeed that the House of Commons appears to be unanimous in favour of an alteration of the law, which would compel

motor-cars to carry some means of identification, and to enable them to go at any pace they like without danger to the public."

That remark met with no opposition in the House, and no criticism in the Press or amongst the public outside, and he had every reason to believe that on these lines legislation would be regarded as being non-controversial. But how completely feeling had changed since that time! That night they had had an interesting debate, and everyone who had listened to it must realise that the majority of those who had spoken had, without hesitation, strongly opposed any relaxation of the limits which were now imposed on the speed at which motor-cars might go. That objection was due entirely to the fact that the users of motor-cars had, during the last few months, or at least a certain number of them, been so reckless in regard to public safety and public comfort, that they had undoubtedly aroused in the public mind feelings which it was impossible for the House to ignore. A short time ago all that was required was that there should be reasonable means of identifying the user of a motor-car, and that he should have due regard to public safety, and that, subject to that, he should be allowed to use the car as he liked, but now a strong feeling of indignation had grown up at what people believed to be an abuse of those privileges. The views expressed in that House had only been a faint echo of the views lately expressed in the leading journals. Let them read the correspondence published in *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* and the *Yorkshire Post* in the last few weeks. Let them read the letters innumerable which had appeared in the London and provincial press, and they would be convinced that the public mind was deeply exercised on the question. If there had been disagreement as to the form which the reform should take, there had been absolute agreement in the House that night as to the necessity for legislation.

A short time ago the difficulty that was anticipated as being the most serious was the opposition of the users of motor-cars to what some of them regarded, and he thought wrongly regarded, as the degrading obligation of carrying a distinguishing mark. He desired to say, however, that his hon. friend the Member for the New Forest, who was a pioneer in the motor movement, had rendered throughout the most loyal and useful assistance alike to the users of motors and the public in general, because not only had he invariably approached the question as a motorist with a strong regard for the public safety, but with a recognition of the difficulties of the case, which he was sorry to say had not been found in many other quarters, where it might be looked for. He desired, therefore, to thank the hon. Member for the assistance he had given him in dealing with that difficult question. He had been taken to task both inside and outside that House because of some remarks he had recently made on the subject in the country when he indicated that he believed now, as he did twelve months ago, that if they were going to deal satisfactorily with this unquestioned difficulty they could only do so by securing—as they had to meet every possible cause of danger to the public—that the offender should be easily identified, and by throwing upon the individual the full and undivided responsibility for the protection of the public safety. He thought that hon. Gentlemen who attached importance to the speed limit did not realise what the speed limit was. He had discussed the question with the chief constables who had had to carry out the law, some of them successfully, some without success. They one and all told him that the real danger to the public consisted, not in going twenty or thirty miles an hour along an open road, when the driver could see three or four miles in front of him, but in going probably even at less than twelve miles an hour when approaching dangerous corners. A policeman who saw a motorist approaching a dangerous corner at a speed of twelve miles an hour had no power to stop or interfere with him, for by statute they had told the man he could go at that pace. But twelve miles an hour would be more dangerous in some parts of a road than thirty in another. The evidence he had been able to collect pointed to the fact that, in the first place, they must make it quite easy to identify the offender. It was said—"What is the use of a distinguishing mark? Some of these drivers, who have been the cause of the present difficulty, who disregard all the laws of good taste and everything else, and drive as and where they like, will not hesitate to conceal their number, and the dust of the road will cover it up." It was possible that here and there there might be an escape from justice, either by fraudulent action on the part of the driver or by the accident of dust on the road; but in the great majority of cases it would be quite easy to find whether a man had his car marked or not. They had evidence to show that drivers, even when they had actually caused injury, had escaped, but he believed that in ninety-nine cases out of 100, if they made the numbers sufficiently conspicuous on the front and back or on the side of a car, they would find that the offender would be capable of identification. It had been said by some speakers that this was a demand by the owners of motor-cars who were rich to be allowed to drive as fast as they liked. He did not hesitate to say that in his judgment the roads of this country were not made for traffic of that kind, and were not suited for driving at a pace of twenty, thirty, or forty miles an hour. There were, however, roads, particularly the Lincoln and Bath road, and the road across Salisbury Plain, where they could see for miles in front of them, where there were no hedges and no ditches, and where motoring was as safe for the general public as it was for the person in the car. In such cases it was obvious that to impose a restriction on the speed limit would be to impose a restriction which would never be carried out, and the users of the motor cars would disregard them not only when it was safe to do so, but also when it was dangerous. Would it not be wiser to put a driver of a motor car in the same position as everybody else, and tell him, "We do not say that twelve miles an hour, or ten or twenty miles, is safe for you to go. We leave you to produce your machine, and drive it, but we impose on you the strictest limitations as to the regard you must have for the public safety?" They were bound to have regard to the fact that, if they drove a conveyance which was capable of being driven much faster than a horse-drawn vehicle, and of being brought to a high speed at a moment's notice, those who drove them must be responsible that they used their cars not only so as to avoid injury to life and limb, but with the least possible injury to the comfort and convenience of the public generally on the road, and beside the road.

It was said that children ought not to play in the road. Undoubtedly, they ought not, but the fact remained that they did. He knew from his own experience that they were often very frightened by the motor-cars passing through the village. But the twelve-mile-an-hour limit did not make it any better for them; it was just as much a source of danger to the child in the street as a speed of fifteen or twenty miles. What they wanted was to secure identification, to secure the means by which the police could tell who a person breaking the law was. Subject to that he believed the wisest policy would be to treat motor drivers as other people, and take care that if they did injury or endangered the public safety, they should be responsible, and should be made amenable for their acts. There had been a very wide difference of opinion expressed as to possible legislation, and he had received a great many letters on the subject. He had been told that there would be strenuous opposition to taking off the speed limit; and that those who were opposed to such a course would stop at nothing in the opposition they would offer to legislation of that character. What was the prospect of legislation? The debate that night had shown that the chances of passing a Bill in the present session were extremely small. The divergencies of opinion regarding speed limit were very great, and discussion on the subject would be very acute. Besides, there was a great amount of legislation already on the Table of the House. There was, of course, absolute unanimity as to the necessity. The difficulty was: What form should it take? He was hopeful that the discussion they had had would be useful, and, without committing the Government to any particular course in regard to legislation, he recognised the demand for it, and that, unless such legislation were passed to check abuses in the use of this means of locomotion, a feeling of hostility to motor-cars would arise, which he would be sorry to see, for he quite believed they had come to stay, and were going to play an important and useful part in locomotion, especially in rural districts not well served by railways. If the use of them was abused, if no proper check were placed on them, the public would step in and interfere, and that he thought would be much to be deplored; that should, if possible, be avoided. He hoped the discussion would help to bring about a compromise that would settle the question, which he admitted called for urgent treatment.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) regretted deeply that the right hon. Gentleman could not see his way clear to introduce legislation this session. He could not understand why a Bill on the subject, so urgently needed, should be further postponed. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to think there had been a remarkable change of opinion on the subject both in and out of the House of Commons, but he apparently over-rated that change or mis-stated its direction, because, so far as he had been able to gather, the debate had shown absolute unanimity as to the immediate need for change, in the interests of the safety of the public, in the present laws affecting these vehicles.

MR. WALTER LONG: I recognised that; but I pointed out that there was great divergence of opinion as to the form legislation should take.

MR. CHAPLIN could not help regretting the doubting accents in which the right hon. Gentleman had expressed himself as to the possibility of introducing legislation this session. He himself was originally responsible for the introduction of the measure dealing with motor-cars. But since that time this form of locomotion had been absolutely revolutionised. At the time that law was passed fifteen-and-a-half miles an hour was the fastest any of these cars had travelled in a race or otherwise. Three years ago they went fifty-three-and-a-half miles an hour, and now he did not exaggerate when he said they went between sixty and seventy, and even eighty miles an hour. He had been in one that went seventy miles an hour, and he sincerely hoped he would never go in another. Personally, he thought it absolutely monstrous that on the King's highway, where everyone had equal rights, cars should be able to travel at the excessive speeds it was known that many of them attained, regardless of the safety and comfort of the public. It was the recklessness with which some of these cars were driven by individuals, and their utter disregard of public opinion and public safety, that had caused their unpopularity in certain quarters. The question was what kind of law there should be on the subject. He ventured to suggest that all motors should be put under the law that applied to other vehicles and furiout driving, with this accompaniment, that there should be penalties added of sufficient severity to insure attention to the law. That was absolutely essential, and surely it was not beyond the powers of statesmanship to carry it out? He would like also to see a system introduced by which all those who drove such vehicles should be obliged to be licensed, and should be the holders of certificates showing them to be thoroughly efficient.

As to the speed limit, that, of course, gave rise to a great deal of difference of opinion, and some Members seemed to think that no motor car should ever be allowed to be driven at more than twelve miles an hour. He was bound to say he regarded that as unreasonable. That speed on an open road might be admissible and not likely to do anyone any harm, but in a village it would be otherwise, and might be disastrous in a crowded town. He, therefore, would be entirely in favour of doing away with that speed limit, and for this reason, that experience had proved that the law as it stood was absolutely useless and totally ineffective for the public safety. Therefore, in the interests of the safety of the public, the time had come when there ought to be a change. There was, in his judgment, a real imperative necessity for a change. When they knew, as they did know, that most distinguished people, even Prime Ministers, were constantly being fined for breaking the law, surely the time had come when things should be put on a somewhat different footing. He entirely agreed with almost everything that fell from his right hon. friend as to what ought to be done at the present time. He sympathised with his right hon. friend's views; and he thought that if those views were put in the form of a Bill they would make the groundwork of a very good measure indeed. His right hon. friend said that there would be no chance of passing it during the present session; but he would suggest to his right hon. friend to introduce the Bill in another place. That would have one effect, at all events. It would enable his right hon. friend to ascertain what was the general feeling in the mind of the public in regard to this question; it would give him a good means of testing public opinion; and if it were not possible to pass the Bill this year, it would help him to pass it another year. With great regard for his right hon. friend, he thought there would be cause for great disappointment if there was to be no attempt on the part of the Government to deal with this question during the present session, the hope having been held out last year that it would be dealt with. A change was inevitably necessary; and why, under those circumstances, there could be any objection, at all events to introduce a Bill and pass it in another place, and if possible in this House also, he could not see. He hoped his right hon. friend would take courage, and before the end of the session make an effort to deal with the question.

Mr. CATHCART WASON said although he did not agree with all the views expressed by the President of the Board of Trade, he recognised the care and attention which the right hon. Gentleman was giving to this important matter; and, therefore, he asked leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

Mr. KEARLEY (Devonport) said the Committee had been discussing a question concerning the safety of the people. He now proposed to make a few observations affecting the health of the people. He was glad of the opportunity of bringing the question forward, because the President of the Board of Trade had taken a great interest in the administration of the Food Adulteration Acts. In 1899, the right hon. Gentleman introduced a Bill which was now an Act of Parliament. The working of that Act, in many ways, had been most beneficial. It strengthened the hands of the Local Government Board, and gave them power to compel the Local authority to perform their part in the administration of the Act. The figures in the Report of the Local Government Board unmistakably confirmed what they said when the Act was passed, namely, that the surest way to get an efficient administration of the Acts was to insist upon the local authorities taking a great number of samples. The figures in the Report of the Local Government Board showed unmistakably that where activity was exercised in taking a considerable number of samples, there the percentage of adulteration diminished. In London one sample was taken for every 291 persons, whereas in the country only one sample was taken for every 536 persons. Therefore, there was still room for considerable improvement in forcing on the attention of the local authorities the extreme necessity of making their officers active and diligent in taking samples. That was the only possible way of reducing adulteration. Twenty years ago the number of samples taken was relatively small, and the percentage of adulteration was 16·2 per cent. Now the percentage has fallen to 8·8 per cent. In a general way, the Act was working beneficially, but there was still plenty of room for improvement. What he desired to call attention to particularly was the adulteration of milk in London, and he would offer the Committee only information from official sources. He would call the attention of the Committee and the right hon. Gentleman to the Annual

Report of the Local Government Board. The Committee would remember that quite recently the Board of Agriculture set up a presumptive standard of purity for milk. Many thought that that standard was unduly low. It was not a high standard; and if the percentage of adulteration still remained high, it could not be alleged there was any difficulty in conforming to the standard. But in London, according to the Local Government Board Report, the adulteration of milk was simply rampant. The average percentage of adulteration in the twenty largest towns excluding London, was 8·3 per cent.; in the whole of the Metropolis it was 15·2. The adulteration consisted mainly in extracting the cream from the milk, in adding water, and, in many cases, preservatives. Everyone understood what an important article of food milk was, and how necessary it was in the interests of the consumer that the supply should be pure. How were the metropolitan boroughs administering the Act? In the City of London the percentage of adulteration found in the number of samples taken was 21 per cent.; in St. Pancras, 34 per cent.; in Shoreditch, 30 per cent.; and in Hackney about 36 per cent. He wished to show what could be done by the efficient administration of the Act. In Manchester, which was the second largest town in the Kingdom, the Act had been administered efficiently for several years. The Corporation of Manchester had been engaged for ten or twelve years in waging a campaign against the adulteration of milk, with the result that the percentage of adulteration was something about 3½ per cent., whereas in London, on the very threshold of the headquarters of the Local Government Board, it was over 15 per cent.

MR. WALTER LONG said that action should be taken by the Board of Agriculture and not by the Local Government Board.

MR. KEARLEY said that surely the right hon. Gentleman would not deny that the Act gave joint power to the Local Government Board and the Board of Agriculture. If the right hon. Gentleman looked up the Act, he would find that his Department was conjointly responsible with the Board of Agriculture. The Board of Agriculture was introduced because some hon. Members had some doubts as to whether the Local Government Board alone would be the best body to enforce the Act. The present state of affairs in London should not be allowed to continue. The right hon. Gentleman had power to send his own inspectors around the Metropolitan area to see that the Act was properly carried out, and he ought to exercise that power. The right hon. Gentleman had stood before the House for many years as the friend of agriculture. He believed the right hon. Gentleman wished well to the agricultural industry; and he should take action in this matter. As the result of adulteration, the consumers of milk in London were paying £30,000 a year, in return for which they did not get milk but water. The right hon. Gentleman scarcely seemed to realise that he had those powers under the Act he himself passed. Inspectors should be specially appointed by the Local Government Board in order that the present serious adulteration of milk in London might be diminished. If the right hon. Gentleman followed the example of Manchester he would be doing a splendid work for London in eliminating, or at all events reducing, the existing adulteration. The offenders should be prosecuted, and, if necessary, imprisoned. It was a great scandal that in the Metropolis, under the very eyes of the right hon. Gentleman and his Department, such an amount of adulteration should be allowed to exist without any steps being taken to stamp the evil out. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be able to give him a satisfactory answer. He was, however, rather surprised that the right hon. Gentleman had overlooked the fact that his Department, together with the Board of Agriculture, was responsible for administering the Act.

*MR. PARTINGTON (Derbyshire, High Peak) said that the question of the medical charges for vaccination was brought forward last year, when the right hon. Gentleman said that he was considering certain payments made in respect of vaccination. He should be glad to know if the right hon. Gentleman had done anything to reduce those enormous charges. He would remind the right hon. Gentleman that since the Act of 1898 came into force, vaccination fees and expenses in England went up something like 300 per cent. He thought the question ought to be taken in hand by the right hon. Gentleman. Many hon. Members had received requests from the Board of Guardians to take the matter up. The Birkenhead Guardians paid £1,732 in vaccination fees, one doctor alone receiving £1,000. He did not know himself why private practitioners should not be allowed to vaccinate at the expense of the public as well as public vaccinators. He thought that would go a long way towards reducing expense. At present a public vaccinator never got less than 6s., whereas a private practitioner vaccinated his poorer patients very often for 2s. 6d. If the private practitioner were allowed to vaccinate as well as the public vaccinator it would save a vast amount of money. He also wished to know if it would be possible for the Local Government Board to supply all doctors with lymph. If there was to be vaccination, and if it was to be satisfactory, the very least the Local Government Board ought to do was to see that people were vaccinated with pure lymph. The right hon. Gentleman should see that Government lymph was supplied to anyone who required it. That would go a long way towards making vaccination more popular and safer. If the right hon. Gentleman would also agree to his suggestion that private practitioners should be allowed to vaccinate at the public expense, he would do away with a great part of the expense which had been incurred since the Act came into force.

MR. SOARES said he should like to add a few words to what his hon. friend had just said with regard to the supply of lymph by the Local Government Board. The law provided that every person should be vaccinated, unless, of course, he made a conscientious objection for himself or his children. The success of the operation of vaccination depended on the quality of the lymph; and as the State insisted on the operation being performed, the State ought to do everything in its power to secure the success of the operation. What was the present position? If a man desired to be vaccinated, he had three options—he could go to the public vaccinator and be vaccinated at the public expense; he could go to the public vaccinator and pay for being vaccinated; or he could go to a private practitioner and pay him. But if he went to a private practitioner he had no means of being assured that he would be vaccinated with pure Government lymph. The same thing applied to public vaccinators, because when their supply of Government lymph ran out, they purchased a supply at the nearest possible place. He was speaking from personal experience on this question. When he was revaccinated last year he ascertained from his doctor that the lymph was obtained from France, with a guarantee from the vendors that it was a portion of other lymph which had been used successfully in vaccinating children in France. So that experiments had been made on poor children in France, in order that it might be successfully sold for vaccination in this country. If the vendors could be guilty of experiments of that kind their guarantee of the purity of the lymph was of little value. Yet this was the lymph used all over the West-end of London last year. He had no doubt that the majority of hon. Members had been revaccinated with that lymph. That was thoroughly unsatisfactory. All lymph should be supplied by a State Department in order to secure absolute purity. The lymph ought to be obtainable from the Government laboratories by every medical practitioner, and doctors should be under heavy penalties for vaccinating persons with any other than Government lymph. Another point was as to what became of the calves after being operated upon. Were they sold to the butcher, or to the farmer? He hoped to hear that they were destroyed. He also hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be able to assure the Committee that little if any suffering was inflicted on the calves by the process of obtaining the lymph.

MR. SPEAR asked the President of the Local Government Board if he would consider the advisability of giving Boards of Guardians power to appoint vaccination stations for revaccination in case of a threatened epidemic of small-pox. He agreed that the expense of carrying out the new Vaccination Act was very much greater than was anticipated owing to the general impression that the lymph supplied by the Local Government Board was superior to that obtained by private practitioners. He therefore supported the appeal that all lymph should be certified by the Local Government Board. The administration of the Act had been much more successful than some anticipated at the time, but it had been proved in practice that the scale of fees was higher than was absolutely necessary. Many people who would have been vaccinated by their private practitioners preferred to go to the public vaccinators, because they believed the lymph was superior. In his constituency a case of small-pox occurred among the prisoners, and caused alarm to the inhabitants in the district, who went to the public vaccinator to be revaccinated, with the result that a great burden was placed on the rates. If the Boards of Guardians had power to appoint stations for revaccination it would save much unnecessary expense.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY (Somersetshire, S.) moved the reduction of the Vote by £100, in order that the attention of the Committee might be concentrated on the question of the adulteration of milk. According to the Report of the Local Government Board, such adulteration was more prevalent in London than in the provinces. When the recent Bill was passing through Committee it was supposed that the Board of Agriculture and the Local Government Board would exercise a kind of dual control, the one looking after the interests of the producer, and the other guarding the interests of the consumer; but, as a matter of fact, the Board of Agriculture seemed to have left the matter to the Local Government Board, and the Local Government Board to the Board of Agriculture. It would be interesting to know whether the right hon. Gentleman had taken advantage of the provision by which, if the local authority failed in its duty in this respect, the Local Government Board Inspectors were enabled to take samples of milk, and prosecute if necessary. It was very desirable that that should be done in London, as he had reason to believe there had been collusion in some cases between the Borough Council inspectors and the vendors. By steps being taken in this direction, adulteration had been practically stamped out in Manchester, and he believed that by the same power being exercised, a similar state of purity could be secured in London. In any case, it would be a great improvement if London were only brought up to the average of the rest of the country.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item A (Salaries) be reduced by £100, in respect of the Salary of the President of the Board."—(*Sir Edward Strachey.*)

Sir Edward Strachey.

MR. BRIGG (Yorkshire, W. R., Keighley) thought that, as it was necessary the people should be sure they were getting a proper supply of lymph, the Government ought to undertake to provide all that was required. As to the adulteration of milk, he hoped something would be done for the country as well as for London, so that the children might have a good supply of that natural food. He noticed a large item in the Vote for the "Engineering Department"; perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would explain what that was for. He would also suggest that more typewriting should be introduced into the Department, so as to do away with a large amount of the £3,000 taken for "copying." With reference to the equalisation of rates, that was a large question which could not at present be taken up, but one which ought to be dealt with. In consequence of better means of locomotion, large bodies of the working-classes gathered in particular districts, and the poor-rates fell more heavily on those districts than on others, and it was very desirable that some method should, if possible, be devised by which the rates were so equalised that all should bear their fair share of the burden.

MR. WALTER LONG said the engineering inspectors conducted all the inquiries which had to be held in connection with sanitary works, drainage and sewage schemes, the erection of workhouses and so forth, and there was not one more engaged than was absolutely necessary. They were constantly employed, and the branch was as hardly worked as any in the public service. As to copying and typewriting, he could not explain the exact division of the work, as it was obviously impossible for the Parliamentary head of such a Department as the Local Government Board to decide how much should be done by copyists and how much by typists. During the past few years, however, there had been a large addition to the typewriting staff, and every year greater use was made of the typewriter and other mechanical devices by which labour was lessened and the work done more rapidly. With regard to vaccination, he had been at some pains to arrive at a satisfactory settlement as to the fees. He had been in communication with the medical men and the local authorities, but had not been able to arrive at a conclusion which would justify him in making an immediate alteration. He had thought it best to obtain a report from a small Departmental Committee, which he hoped would not be long over its work, and he would then decide definitely what should be the fees. As to the supply of lymph, that question had often been debated in the House. He could not hold out any hope of being able to supply lymph to private practitioners. It had to be remembered that public vaccinators obtained their lymph for primary vaccination free of charge, and during the recent epidemic of small-pox the Board were able to supply them not only with the lymph for primary vaccination, but also with a large proportion of that required for secondary vaccination. The demand that the lymph should be supplied also to the private practitioner was a very natural one, but he doubted whether it was really necessary. There was a Jenner Institute in London, which made arrangements for the supply of lymph quite as good in quality and character as that supplied by the Government. In addition to that, there were growing up over the country great laboratories in which all sorts of admirable scientific work was being carried on, and in which, among other things, they were producing lymph which probably would be as good as anything the Government produced. There was also the lymph produced by ordinary mercantile firms. During the recent epidemic he made every inquiry to see whether there was any justification for the idea that this ordinary mercantile lymph was not of a thoroughly satisfactory character, but he failed to find any evidence that the majority of it could not be relied upon as being thoroughly satisfactory in all respects. To undertake to supply all medical men with a supply of lymph at a certain price would mean an entire change in the Government lymph establishment, and the ruin of the commercial people who had entered upon its manufacture as a part of their business. Moreover, it was quite conceivable that at times of great pressure the Government Department would not be able to supply all the lymph required, and the result would be a breakdown. By a recent scientific discovery, which was not yet fully developed, it might be made possible to produce lymph which would not have to be destroyed if kept beyond a certain time, but at present the real difficulty with which they had to contend was the fact that lymph could not be produced during the slack time and put in reserve for use when the pressure came. Sterilised lymph could not be kept for more than a certain time, so that it was impossible to accumulate reserve for use in time of an epidemic, consequently it would be incurring a great risk to undertake to supply all private practitioners in the country. He quite realised the force of the demand, and he was not making this statement without having carefully considered and discussed the question, not only with his own medical advisers, but also with distinguished medical men outside the Department. Among those who were best qualified to judge, it was agreed that it was better to continue the present system than to put the whole supply of lymph into the hands of the Government. So far as he knew, the manufacture of lymph had been under the control and supervision of a medical man, and they ran no risk of any kind whatever. In regard to the calves, the medical man bought and disposed of them, and he did not know what became of them. He did not, however, think that the calves were any worse for the operation they had been under. With regard to the administration of the Adulteration Acts, nothing would be more prejudicial than to let the local authorities believe that the Local Government Board were willing to do their work for them and bear the expense. When the local authority did not do its work as well as it ought, the Department immediately pressed on them the importance of taking samples and vigorously applying the Act of 1899. That Act had not been long on the Statute-book, but it had already produced good results, and as far as he was responsible for the administration of the Local Government Board, he should be careful that the local authorities were constantly reminded of and kept up to their duties.

MR. KEARLEY said he had specially alluded to the adulteration of milk in London, and yet the right hon. Gentleman had only given them a general assurance that he would remind the local authorities of their duty in this matter. That was hardly sufficient, and he wished to know if the President of the Local Government Board would undertake to see that the Adulteration Acts were enforced in London, especially in regard to the adulteration of milk.

MR. WALTER LONG said he had distinctly stated that to do the work of the London County Council or London Borough Councils by Government agency, at Government cost, would be the very worst thing in the interests of the Adulteration Acts. There had undoubtedly been a want of activity in London, and his business was to urge the municipal authorities in London to do their work properly and at their own cost. He should do in the future what he had done hitherto, that was to press upon the local authorities that it was their duty to carry out the law.

MR. PHILIPPS (Pembrokeshire) thought the reply of the right hon. Gentleman was not at all satisfactory, for he had simply promised that when the local authorities did not do their work properly in regard to the Adulteration Acts he would put a little pressure upon them. The hon. Member for Devonport had shown conclusively that the local authorities in London were not doing their duty. It was admitted that in Manchester the percentage of adulteration was only 3½ per cent., while in London it was 15 per cent., and in the City of London 21 per cent. He thought his hon. friend was entitled to ask what the Department had done in the case of the City of London. Then there was the case of Hackney where, out of 305 samples taken, 112 were found to be adulterated. Was that not sufficient to demand the interference of the Local Government Board? No less than 36 per cent of the samples of milk taken in Hackney were found to be adulterated. They had had a good deal of discussion about the physique of the people of this country deteriorating, and considering the number of children who had to drink milk, and the fact that in London no less than 15 per cent. of the samples taken had been found to be adulterated, he wished to know if anything could be more serious than that state of things in the Metropolis. This condition of things was not adequately met by saying that when there was a bad case they could rely upon the right hon. Gentleman doing something. Had the President of the Local Government Board done anything in this matter in the City of London or in the Borough of Hackney, and if not, why not? As the representative of an agricultural constituency this question of the adulteration of milk was of great importance to the people whom he represented. The selling of milk and water for milk was something from which the farmer and the people were entitled to be protected. He felt justified in speaking somewhat strongly on this question because he remembered the hon. Member for Devonport and the hon. Member for Somerset sat upon the Committee when the Adulteration Acts were passed, and they were very prominent in their endeavours to improve the Acts upon this point. Bearing that fact in mind he thought his hon. friends were entitled to press upon the Government that they should use every power they had to the utmost, when it was shown that the adulteration of milk in London amounted to no less than 15 per cent.

MR. KEARLEY said that the right hon. Gentleman's defence was very lame. It was clear that he did not realise the responsibility of his Department. If these Adulteration Acts were to be carried out effectively the local authorities must be compelled to work them; and that duty was thrown on the Local Government Board by the Act of 1899. The right hon. Gentleman had not done this, and he had simply stated that it would be better for him not to interfere with the work of the London County Council and the Borough Councils. He should continue to press this matter upon the attention of the Department. He had quoted the case of Manchester, where by a persistent campaign against milk adulteration they had reduced adulteration to 3½ per cent. If that was possible in Manchester surely it was possible in London. The adulteration of milk in Hackney amounted to 36 per cent., and in other London Boroughs to over 30 per cent., and the only satisfaction they got was a statement from the right hon. Gentleman that it was practically unreasonable for him to step in and do the work of the Borough Councils. He hoped that after what had been said in this debate the right hon. Gentleman would give some attention to this matter.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 35; Noes, 91. (Division List No. 117.)

AYES.

Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Allen, Charles P(*Glouc., Stroud*
Brigg, John
Caldwell,) James
Cawley, Frederick
Channing, Francis Allston
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cullinan, J.
Doogan, P. C.
Fuller, J. M. F.
Helme, Norval Watson
Horniman, Frederick John
Joicey, Sir James
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Joyce, Michael
Lundon, W.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
M'Kenna, Reginald

M'Laren, Sir Charles Benj.
Murphy, John
Philipps, John Wynford
Roberts, John Bryn (*Eifion*)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Samuel, Herbert L. (*Cleveland*)
Samuel, S. M. (*Whitechapel*)
Scott, C. Prestwich (*Leigh*)
Shackleton, David James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Soares, Ernest J.
Thomas, David A. (*Merthyr*)
Thomas, J. A. (*Glam., Gower*)
Thomson, F. W. (*York, W. R.*)
Toulmin, George
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Sir Edward Strachey and Mr. Kearley.

NOES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt Hon. Sir H
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Man'r*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bhownaggree, Sir M. M.
Bignold, Arthur
Bond, Edward
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Bull, William James
Butcher, John George
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H
Cavendish, V C W (*Derbysh.*)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chamberlain, Rt Hon J (*Birm*
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Churchill, Winston Spencer
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Collings, Right Hon. Jesse
Colomb, Sir John Charles Ready
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasgow*)
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cox, Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Cranborne, Viscount
Crossley, Sir Savile
Dickinson, Robert Edmond
Digby, John K. D. Wingfield-
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Forster, Henry William
Fyler, John Arthur
Gibbs, Hn. Vicary (*St. Albans*
Gore, Hon. S. F. Ormsby-(*Lincs.*
Gray, Ernest (*West Ham*)
Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld. G. (*Midx*
Hamilton, Marq. of (*Londondy*
Horner, Frederick William
Keswick, William
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*)
Lawson, John Grant (*Yorks. NR*
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (*Bristol, S.*
Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
M'Calmont, Colonel James
Maxwell, W. JH. (*Dumfriessh.*)
Montagu, G. (*Huntingdon*)
More, Robt. Jasper (*Shropshire*
Morrison, James Archibald
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Murray, Chas. J. (*Coventry*)
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Percy, Earl
Pretyman, Ernest George
Purvis, Robert
Rankin, Sir James
Reid, James (*Greenock*)
Renwick, George
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Rutherford, W. W. (*Liverpool*)
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Scott, Sir S. (*Marylebone, W.*)
Seely, Chas. Hilton (*Lincoln*)
Seely, Maj. J. E. B (*Isle of Wight*
Smith, James Parker (*Lanarks.*
Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (*Strand*)
Spear, John Ward
Stanley, Edw. Jas. (*Somerset*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Stroyan, John
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. *Ox'd Univ.*
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Valentia, Viscount
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Warde, Colonel C. E.
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

And it being Midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Resolution to be reported upon Monday next; Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

PUBLIC OFFICES (DUBLIN) [ADVANCES.]

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [9th June], "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the Resolution, 'That it is expedient to authorise the issue, out of the Consolidated Fund, of such sums, not exceeding in the whole £225,000, as may be required for the purposes of any Act of the present session for the acquisition of certain land in Dublin, and for the erection and equipment of a Royal College of Science and other buildings for the public service, and to authorise the Treasury for the purpose of providing for the issue and repayment of such sums to borrow money by means of Terminable Annuities for a period not exceeding thirty years, such annuities to be paid out of moneys to be provided by Parliament for the Service of the Commissioners, and if those moneys are insufficient out of the Consolidated Fund.'"

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

Question put and agreed to.

PREVENTION OF DISEASE (FRUIT TREES) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

Adjourned at five minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 12*th June*, 1903.

EARLDOM OF NORFOLK.

Petition of Henry Duke of Norfolk that he may be permitted to withdraw the case, propositions, and pedigree already lodged by him, and to lodge in lieu thereof a revised print of such case, propositions, and pedigree; read, and ordered as prayed.

THE LORD CRANWORTH.

Sat first in Parliament after the death of his father.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with: Newcastle-upon-Tyne Electric Supply; Cheshire Lines Committee; Highland and Invergarry and Fort Augustus Railway Companies; Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours; Midland and Belfast and Northern Counties Railways; Wellingborough and District Tramroads; Seaforth and Sefton Junction Railway; Watford and Edgware Railway; London County Council (Tramways and Improvements); East Ham Improvement; West Cumberland Electric Tramways.

Also the Certificates that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with: Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5); Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7); Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 4); Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (Housing of the Working Classes).

Also the Certificate that no Standing Orders are applicable to the following Bill: Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6).

Also the Certificate that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with: London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway.

And also the Certificates that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with: Scottish Central Electric Power; Scottish Ontario and Manitoba Land Company, Limited; Hutcheson's Hospital and Hutcheson's Educational Trust.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Scottish Central Electric Power Bill [H.L.]. Presented, and read 1ª.

Scottish Ontario and Manitoba Land Company Bill [H.L.]. Presented; read 1ª; and referred to the Examiners.

Ebbw Vale Water and Improvement Bill; Crystal Palace District Gas Bill; Leigh Corporation Bill. Read 2ª, and committed: The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Gas Light and Coke Company Bill; Hampton Court Gas Bill. Read 2ª, and committed.

Lancashire and Yorkshire and London and North-Western Railways (Steam Vessels) Bill. Read 2a, and committed: The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Coventry Electric Tramways Bill. Read 2ª, and committed.

Hastings Harbour District Railway Bill [H.L.]. Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Burgess Hill and St. John's Common Gas Bill; Scarborough Gas Bill; Sittingbourne District Gas Bill. Read 3ª, and passed.

Rochester Corporation Tramways and Improvements Bill [H.L.]; North-Western Electricity and Power Gas Bill [H.L.]; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Fife Electric Power Bill [H.L.]; Liverpool University Bill [H.L.]. Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Barry Railway Bill [H.L.]; Didcot, Newbury, and Southampton Railway Bill [H.L.]; Taff Vale Railway Bill [H.L.]; Willesden Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]; Scottish American Mortgage Company, Limited, Bill [H.L.]. Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Midland Railway Bill. Read 3a, with the Amendments; further Amendments made; Bill passed, and returned to the Commons.

Winchester Water and Gas Bill. Read 3ª, with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons.

South Wales Mineral Railway Bill [H.L.]. Returned from the Commons agreed to.

Cleveland and Durham County Electric Power Bill [H.L.]. Returned from the Commons agreed to, with an Amendment. The said Amendment considered, and agreed to.

Indiarubber, Guttapercha, and Telegraph Works Company Bill [H.L.]; Milford Docks Bill [H.L.]. Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments; the said Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Bill [H.L.]; Wellington (Salop) Gas Bill [H.L.]. Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No 2) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill. House in Committee (according to Order); Bills reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bills to be read 3ª on Monday next.

North British Railway (General Powers) Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.]. Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Lanarkshire and Ayrshire Railway Order Confirmation Bill. Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed.

St. Luke's Church and Parish Quoad Sacra Edinburgh Order Confirmation Bill (H.L.). Read 3ª (according to Order) and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Dundee Royal Lunatic Asylum Orders Confirmation Bill. Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed.

PETITION.

LAND REGISTERS SCOTLAND BILL [H.L.].

Petition against; of Procurators of Dumfriesshire; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

No. 2994. Denmark.
No. 2995. Corea.

COLONIES (ANNUAL).

No. 386. Falkland Islands: Report for 1902.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

HARWICH HARBOUR.

Abstract of the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the Harwich Harbour Conservancy Board from the time of their incorporation down to and inclusive of the 31st March, 1903. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

A QUESTION OF PRECEDENT.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS: My Lords, as Lord Balfour of Burleigh has taken charge of the eccentric Bills that we had before us yesterday—the County Councils (Bills in Parliament) Bill and the Borough Funds Bill—I propose on Monday to put this Question to him, namely, to ask whether there are any precedents for Bills being proceeded with in Parliament on any subject under inquiry and consideration at the time, by a Committee or Commission, and, if so, will he state what those precedents are.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND (Lord BALFOUR of BURLEIGH): Would the noble Earl allow a little longer notice? Having regard to the fact that his Question must come after that of the noble Viscount (Viscount Goschen) I think it improbable that it will be reached on Monday. If he would put it down for Tuesday I should have no objection.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS: Very well, I will put it down for Tuesday.

MUNICIPAL TRADING.

LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: My Lords, there are two notices on the Paper in the name of the noble Duke the Leader of the House, to move that certain Lords be named to join with Committees of the House of Commons, to consider the question of Municipal Trading and also the Port of London Bill. The other House, as we know, rises earlier on this night of the week, and it would be a great convenience if these two formal Motions were granted precedence in order that we might get the decision of this House down to the other House before they adjourn to-night, as I understand that one at least of the Committees would be desirous of meeting on Monday. I trust that the noble Earl the Leader of the Opposition will have no objection to that course, which I am sure would be for the general benefit.

EARL SPENCER: I entirely concur in what the noble Lord proposes.

Moved, That the Lords following be named of the Committee to join with a Committee of the House of Commons on Municipal Trading, viz.:—E. Crewe, L. Zouche, L. Barnard, L. Brougham and Vaux, L. Aberdare, L. Lamington, L. Rothschild.—(*Lord Balfour of Burleigh, for The Duke of Devonshire.*)

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (The Earl of MORLEY.): My Lords, some of your Lordships may remember that a year or two ago I called attention to the veto that is now exercised by local authorities upon all tramways that are projected in the districts over which they have jurisdiction. I was thinking of suggesting to your Lordships that it was very desirable that some inquiry, by a Joint Committee or otherwise, should be had into this matter, but when I saw that the Joint Committee upon Municipal Trading was to be revived, and as I remembered that a good deal of evidence was taken on that point by that Committee, it seemed to me unnecessary to suggest to your Lordships the appointment of another Committee, and that the question might very possibly, at any rate in a collateral way, be inquired into by the Committee on Municipal Trading.

On Question, Motion agreed to.

Ordered, That such Committee have power to agree with the Committee of the House of Commons in the appointment of a Chairman.

Then a Message was ordered to be sent to the House of Commons in answer to their said Message to inform them of the appointment of the said Committee by the House, and to propose that the Joint Committee do meet in Committee Room B. on Monday next at Three o'clock.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Moved, That the Lords following be named of the Committee to join with a Committee of the House of Commons, viz.:—V. Cross, L. Wolverton, L. Brassey, L. Hawkesbury, L. Ludlow.—(*Lord Balfour of Burleigh, for the Duke of Devonshire*).

On Question, Motion agreed to.

Ordered, That such Committee have power to agree with the Committee of the House of Commons in the appointment of a Chairman.

Then a Message was ordered to be sent to the House of Commons in answer to their said Message to inform them of the appointment of the said Committee by this House, and to propose that the Joint Committee do meet in Committee Room A. on Thursday next at half-past Two o'clock.

REDEMPTION AND PURCHASE OF QUIT AND CROWN RENTS IN IRELAND.

Lord CASTLETOWN, who had given notice—1. To move for a return showing all sums received for the redemption and purchase of quit and Crown rents in Ireland since 1897, and how the capital sum has been disposed of; 2. To ask if, having regard to the extensive sale of estates contemplated under the operation of the proposed Irish Land Bill, 1903, His Majesty's Government will make provision in the future that all such sums received for the redemption and purchase of quit and Crown rents in Ireland, instead of being merged in the general capital of the land revenues of the Crown and spent in Great Britain, should be reserved and appropriated for the re-afforestation and improvement of those areas in Ireland which it is proposed to vest in trustees under Clause 18 of the Irish Land Bill of 1903, said: My Lords, I shall not trespass on your Lordships' time for more than a few minutes, but I desire to explain the reasons why I have placed this Question on the Paper. Mr. Lecky, in another place on 4th April, 1898, moved for a Return showing all sums received for the reduction and purchase of quit and Crown rents in Ireland since 1863, and how the capital sum had been disposed of. He received that Return, and appended to the Return was a note saying that—

> "These sums have been merged in the general capital of the land revenues of the Crown under the management of the Commissioners of Woods, etc., and invested with moneys received from other sources in the purchase of estates in Great Britain and the redemption of charges on Crown property in Great Britain."

Your Lordships will observe that there was no payment or repayment made to the funds in Ireland. The sum received was a large one, amounting to some £244,5 . Since then, of course, further estates have been sold and more quit rents and Crown rents have been redeemed. I do not desire in any way to criticise the manner in which those funds were utilised, but I cannot help thinking that it would have been wiser if they had been used for the purpose of the Crown in Ireland. There are Crown lands in Ireland which might have been improved, and possibly ameliorated, if that had been done. I offer this merely as a suggestion, but the purchase of a Royal residence might have been arranged with the funds at the disposal of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests. I bring forward this question most humbly, and not with any wish to dictate to the Treasury or to contend that funds connected with Ireland should be used for any other purpose than for the benefit of the Crown and of the State generally. But I do think that funds which are, if one may say so, absolutely derived from land in Ireland, should be utilised for the amelioration and improvement of that country.

I now come to the second part of my Question. As your Lordships know, there is before the other House a Bill, the Committee stage of which will, I believe, be taken next week, and which most Irishmen will be glad to see passed. In that Bill there is a very valuable clause—namely, Clause 18. This clause deals with the lands which would be purchased by the Estate Commissioners, and it is proposed that those lands should be handed over, as I understand, to trustees for the Crown to deal with I would venture to suggest that it would be for the benefit of the country if these funds, coming under the name of quit and Crown rents, and which belong to the Woods and Forests, were utilised for the purpose of improving the waste lands which it is proposed to hand, under that clause, to trustees, and especially for re-afforestation. Your Lordships are aware that in Germany and in France the forests are managed entirely by the State, and have been proved to be a very lucrative source of revenue to the State. I believe the same result would obtain in Ireland. I therefore think that if His Majesty's Government could be induced to look into this matter from the point of view I have ventured to put forward in the second part of my Question, it would be to the benefit of the country. Speaking as one who has had a great deal to do with the timber trade generally, and also judging from information I have received from France and Germany on the subject, I think it would be of very great advantage to Ireland if some such scheme were carried out. I should be glad, therefore, to elicit information from His Majesty's Government on the subject, and I trust that the Return for which I have asked will be granted.

Moved, for a Return showing all sums received for the redemption and purchase of quit and Crown rents in Ireland since 1897, and how the capital sum has been disposed of.—(*Lord Castletown.*)

THE EARL OF DENBIGH: My Lords, I can give the noble Lord the information he asks for with regard to the sums received in redemption of quit and Crown rents in Ireland. If he presses for the Return I can let him have it, or I can give him the information now. The total received since 31st March, 1898, has amounted to £93,120, of which £17,379 was received in the year ended 31st March, 1903, and since the latter date a sum of £15,636 has been invested in Bank of Ireland Stock. With regard to what the noble Lord has said as to the manner in which this money is utilised, I am afraid I can only repeat the answers which have already been given in another place when somewhat similar questions have been asked, and point out to him that under the Crown Lands Act of 1829 the sums received under the heads referred to must be invested in the purchase of land or hereditaments, or the redemption of charges or encumbrances on land already belonging to the Crown. I have no doubt whatever that a scheme of re-afforestation in Ireland is of very great importance, and might possibly be of benefit to the country; but I am afraid it cannot be considered under this head, because the money is not available for that purpose without legislation on the subject. Moreover, by attempting to earmark these funds for the definite purpose of investment in Ireland you would be giving away the principle that Crown lands are not the property of a particular district in which they are situated but the property of the nation as a whole.

EARL SPENCER: I only rise to call attention to one fact in regard to the notice of my noble friend behind me. It is this: whether the second Question is really in order. I do not think I need dwell on it, because the noble Earl opposite has practically answered it, but it seems to me exceedingly irregular to refer to a Bill that is actually in the House of Commons and to suggest that an alteration of one of the clauses should be made in that Bill in order to carry out the noble Lord's view. I only rise to say that, because I think in regard to the future we ought to be careful not to set a dangerous precedent. I certainly think that an allusion to a clause in a Bill which the Government have introduced in the House of Commons is irregular and should not have appeared on the Notice Paper of your Lordships' House.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (The Earl of HALSBURY): I quite agree with what the noble Earl has said.

LORD CASTLETOWN: I beg to thank the noble Earl for his reply, which will enable me, when the Bill comes up to this House, to meet the very sound arguments brought forward by the noble Earl. I was not aware that these sums were earmarked for those particular purposes, but the information I have received will very likely enable me to bring up an Amendment which will meet the difficulty.

Motion (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL'S EXPENDITURE IN PROMOTING AND OPPOSING BILLS IN PARLIAMENT.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, I beg to move for the Return standing in my name of all expenses incurred by the London County Council in promoting and opposing Bills in Parliament. I moved a similar Motion on a previous occasion in different terms, and the Lord Chancellor, who at that time was deputed to answer me, requested me to withdraw the Motion and confer with the Local Government Board. This I have done, and the terms in which the Motion now stands have been arranged, I understand, between the Local Government Board and the London County Council.

Moved, For a Return, in the following form, of all expenses incurred by the London County Council (A.) promoting and (B.) opposing Bills in Parliament in each session up to and including that for the year 1902:—

A.

Session.	Titles of Bills promoted by the Council.	Amount expended by the Council in promoting each such Bill, with total for each Session.		Whether such Bill passed into Law.
		Total for each Bill.	Total for each Session.	
		£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	

B.

Session.	Titles of Bills opposed by the Council.	Amount expended by the Council in opposing each such Bill, with total for each Session.		Result of the Council's opposition.
		Total for each Bill.	Total for each Session.	
		£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	

—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: I understand there is no objection to the granting of the Return for which the noble Earl moves.

On Question, Motion agreed to.

COAL MINES (CERTIFICATES) BILL.

House in Committee (according to Order); Bill reported without Amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN (AMENDMENT) BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª (according to Order); An Amendment (privilege) made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

MUNICIPAL TRADING.

Message from the Commons that they have ordered that the Committee appointed by them to join with the Committee of this House to consider the question of municipal trading do meet the Lords Committee in Committee Room B. on Monday next at three o'clock, as proposed by their Lordships.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Message from the Commons that they have ordered that the Committee appointed by them to join with the Committee of this House to consider the Port of London Bill do meet the Lords Committee in Committee Room A on Thursday next at half-past two o'clock, as proposed by their Lordships.

House adjourned at Five o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 12th June, 1903.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords and referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, viz.—

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time upon Monday next.

Caledonian Railway Order Confirmation Bill; Edinburgh Corporation (Markets, Slaughter Houses, etc.) Order Confirmation Bill; Grangemouth Water Order Confirmation Bill; Lanarkshire Electricity and Refuse Destruction Order Confirmation Bill, considered; to be read the third time upon Monday next.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP F).

The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS informed the House: That the Committee on Group F of Private Bills not being appointed to meet until Tuesday next, the parties promoting the Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill (Portadown and Banbridge Joint Waterworks Board Provisional Order) had appeared before him and proved that the evidence of James Lougheed Rowlett, M.D., Medical Officer of Health, Portadown, was essential to their case, and that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House.

Ordered, That James Lougheed Rowlett do attend the Committee on Group F of Private Bills on Tuesday next, at Twelve of the clock.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the mayor, aldermen, and citizens of the city of Exeter to construct tramways and street improvements; and for other purposes." [Exeter Corporation Bill [Lords].]

Exeter Corporation Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

Small Dwellings (Acquisition) Bill. Second Reading upon Friday next.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 10) Bill. Reported without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table. Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 12) Bill. Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table. Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 14) Bill. Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table. Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next.

Local Government Provisional Order (No. 16) Bill. Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table. Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next.

Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) Bill. Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table. Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next.

Wirral Railway Bill [Lords]; Rickmansworth Gas Bill [Lords]; Harrogate Water Bill [Lords]. Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PETITIONS.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.

Petitions against: from Cuckfield; and Swindon; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY COUNCILS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petition from Barrow-in-Furness, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL.

Petition from North Shields, against; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.

Petitions against: from Stirling; Greasbro' and North Shields; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Hawick, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.

Petitions against: from Cuckfield; and Bury-St.-Edmunds; to lie upon the Table.

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Irvine and Fullarton; Leeds; Alloa; Barrow; Castle Howard; and Mansfield and Sutton; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

Petition from Barrow-in-Furness, for alteration of law; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

School Board Swimming Baths.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Education Department on the 5th March 1891 stated that they were prepared to sanction loans for the provision by the London School Board of four proposed swimming baths, one of which was to be erected at the Hugh Myddelton School; that after the objections of the Department to the preliminary plans in May 1902 had been met by the School Board, the Board of Education for the first time refused to sanction the Board's proposal to construct swimming baths, and subsequently declined to give the matter further consideration; and, if so, will he state whether the Board of Education will now reconsider the position they have taken up with regard to the provision of this swimming bath by the School Board; and also say in how many cases in England during the last ten years the Board of Education have approved plans and sanctioned loans for the provision of swimming baths by School Boards.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) The Board do not consider that the School Board are the proper persons to erect swimming baths, in view of the fact that other local authorities have been given powers for this purpose. The decision of the Board not to allow the School Board's application was only come to after careful consideration. The reply to the last portion of the Question is seven.

Police and Motor-Cars.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in view of the fact that the police have instructions to take proceedings against drivers of motor-cars equally with those of other vehicles who drive to the common danger, will he say what means the police adopt to arrest the progress of motor-cars in the case of drivers who disobey police signals to stop.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas.*) I understand that in the inner streets of the Metropolis the police do not as a rule find difficulty in stopping or in identifying drivers of motor-cars. In the less frequented roads, however, the task is more difficult, and they consider that the assistance of some means of identification is much needed. I do not think it is desirable to explain in detail the means adopted by the police, nor indeed would it be possible, as their action is of necessity guided by the circumstances of each case.

Underground Pipes and Wires—Excavation of Streets.

SIR THOMAS DEWAR (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in view of the inconvenience occasioned in the Metropolis through the disturbance of the roadway of important thoroughfares, will he consider the expediency of taking such steps as may be necessary to admit of pipes and wires being carried through the tube and underground railways.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas.*) I understand that this is one of the matters which will come under the consideration of the Royal Commission on London traffic.

SIR THOMAS DEWAR: To ask the President of the Local Government Board, if he will consider the desirability of instructing the local authorities to consult with the police with a view to facilitate traffic when the opening up of the streets of busy thoroughfares is found necessary.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) It would seem desirable that the police should have notice when it is proposed to break up a busy thoroughfare, and especially in London; but the matter is not one with respect to which I am empowered to give any instructions.

Vaccination Prosecutions at Gainsborough.

MR. SEYMOUR ORMSBY-GORE (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough): To ask the President of the Local Government Board, if his attention has been drawn to the fact that officers of the Local Government Board have directed prosecutions to be instituted against persons for non-compliance with the Vaccination Act of 1898 in the town of Gainsborough, and that these proceedings have been taken without previous consultation with the board of guardians; and whether, seeing that the board of guardians have decided not to prosecute cases coming within the Act, he will state what steps he proposes to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) A medical inspector of my Department pointed out to the vaccination officers that it was their duty under the Vaccination Acts to take proceedings in cases of default, but he did not direct prosecutions to be instituted. As regards the last part of the Question I do not propose to take any steps in the matter. It has been decided by the High Court that a vaccination officer is empowered to take proceedings of the kind referred to notwithstanding directions from the guardians not to prosecute.

Pay of Royal Army Medical Corps in India.

MR. SEYMOUR ORMSBY-GORE: To ask the Secretary of State for India if he will explain why the inducements in excess of the ordinary pay of the Royal Army Medical Corps, which were held out to medical men, who were originally employed by His Majesty's Government during the South African war, by the India Office to proceed in the employ of the Indian Government to India, have not been fulfilled.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) I am not aware to what my hon. friend refers. If he will kindly be more explicit I shall be happy to furnish such information as may be in my power.

Erection of Buoy on Sand-bar at Ballycarbery (County Kerry).

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that fishing boats have lately stranded on the Ballycarbery sand-bar in the Cahirciveen river, county Kerry, thereby causing the loss of their night's fishing; and, if so, whether the Congested Districts Board will erect a buoy on the bar, and perches on the Lack-a-vallig and East Ballycarbery reef of rocks, in the river estuary, in order to render the channel safe for navigation.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) In May 1901 the Congested Districts Board offered to make a contribution towards the cost of placing a buoy on the bar provided the County Council carried out the work. The Board also offered to defray one-half the cost of removing the Carrig-a-vallig rock, but no action has since been taken by the council in respect to either work.

the remission of taxation. All I can say is that, if the taxpayers of the country are satisfied with such a remission, they are indeed thankful for small mercies.

With regard to the financial situation in which we find ourselves, ought we not to receive from our self-governing colonies in South Africa much larger contributions towards the Imperial expenditure of the country? We have heard a great deal lately about preferential tariffs and preferential trade. What is the actual situation with regard to Canada? Canada at present takes £1,500,000 of revenue out of the £9.000,000 of exports which we send her, and we receive from Canada £21,000,000 of exports absolutely free of any charge whatever. It is also the fact that the British nation provides practically for the Imperial defence of the whole Empire at a cost of 29s. per head, towards which Canada contributes a merely nominal sum, although it is perfectly true that she remits one-third of her import duty. amounting to about £750,000 a year in favour of the British exporters. I need give no further illustrations, but the same applies in regard to Australia and to New Zealand. As to South Africa, are we to understand that, after expending £250,000,000 to repel the invasion of Cape Colony and Natal, we are to be satisfied with a paltry contribution of £30,000,000 from the whole of South Africa? Right through the war certain districts of South Africa have been booming. Places like Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg and Pretoria, and other places, especially on the coast. have been in a state of great prosperity. The De Beers Preference Shares are worth ten times their issue price, and shares of other mining companies are worth several times their face value. It is idle to tell me that a contribution of £30,000,000 represents in a way a just share of the burden of the war which we waged to preserve the integrity of South Africa. We have received no contribution whatever from Cape Colony, and Natal has undertaken only some slight financial responsibility. I put it to the Chancellor of the Exchequer—Is he satisfied with the £30,000,000 which has been arranged for as the one and only contribution from South Africa towards the cost of the war?

Mr. Joseph Walton.

Not only do we find ourselves in a very serious financial position as regards the overburdening of the taxpayers of this country, but we are further injured commercially by the fact that within the last few years we have increased our National Debt by £160,000,000. It is not only our Imperial debt that we have to consider. Our local debt in England, Scotland, and Wales amounts to £360,000,000, in addition to which we guarantee £30,000,000 or £35,000,000 loan in South Africa, and we are also contemplating incurring a financial responsibility in connection with Ireland of £120,000,000 or £150,000,000. The aggregate of our national financial responsibility, Imperial and local, amounts therefore to over £1,300,000,000. What I desire to see in the future is a national balance sheet, both of Imperial and of local indebtedness, having our liabilities stated on the one side and our assets on the other. I am aware that we have assets. Half the local loans relate to revenue producing works; we have also the Suez Canal shares; and in the postal and telegraphic service we possess a valuable asset producing an annual profit of £4,500.000. It would be interesting and useful to have a national balance sheet such as I suggest. One serious result of having suspended the Sinking Fund for three years and increased the debt by £160,000,000 is the depreciation in the value of Consols. Consols are the premier security of the world, and they have depreciated by no less than 21 per cent. This ought to have brought home to the people of this country in startling fashion the fact that our financial resources are not unlimited. We had from the Chancellor of the Exchequer an explanation of the causes that have led to the great fall in Consols. I submit that the real explanation is to be found in the fact that in recent years the supply of Consols has greatly exceeded the demand owing to the wealth of the country being limited. We were told that the Sinking Fund provided for in this Bill would wipe out the National Debt, provided there were no increase, in fifty years. I am afraid that that was based not he assumption that Consols could be bought up at 8 per cent. below par. I sincerely hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer does not anticipate that our premier security will remain at 8 per cent. below par. It would indeed be a grievous calamity for the financial future of the country if that proved to be the case. We were also told that the £25,500,000 allocated to the reduction of the National Debt would, owing to the lower rate of interest, secure the same reduction that £28,000,000 did in 1875. I submit that any saving of interest on the National Debt ought to be devoted, not to the reduction of the sum allocated to the reduction of the Debt, but to the more rapid reduction of the principal. This is necessary to secure the national credit. It is a most lamentable fact that, owing to the enormous national expenditure of the last three years, the whole of the savings effected by the nation at the cost of considerable self-sacrifice during the last thirty years for the reduction of the National Debt, should have been entirely swept away, and that we should be face to face to-day with a national debt higher than that of twenty-five years ago.

My third point of objection to the Bill is that it does not give an equitable reduction of taxation to the indirect taxpayer. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is in the position of being able to remit £10,500,000 out of the £45,500,000 increase of the last eight years. The policy of recent years has been to impose an equal amount of direct and indirect taxation. Why then on this occasion should four-fifths of the relief be given to the direct taxpayer and only one-fifth to the indirect taxpayer? In considering the incidence of taxation, everyone is agreed that taxation should, as far as possible, be imposed so as to call upon every man to bear the burden he is able, according to his means. We cannot disregard the incidence of local taxation. Over £50,000,000 is taken out of the pockets of the British taxpayer for local taxation, and of this £50,000,000 an enormous proportion is borne by the working classes of this country. Take the case of a working man hiring a house in London, say at 7s. 6d. per week. No less than one-third of that sum goes for local rates and taxes. He is taxed to the extent of £6 10s. per annum in connection with local taxation for a very poor dwelling in London. Therefore, out of 25s. a week he pays 10 per cent. to satisfy local rates and taxes, and probably another 10 per cent. for Imperial taxes, or 20 per cent. of his entire income. That is a 4s. in the £ Income Tax. And yet we are told that one-third of the population are so poor that they could not be called upon to bear any taxation whatever. In considering how the £10,500,000 surplus should be applied, such facts as I have put before the House ought to receive the serious consideration of the House. Local rates have doubled in London within the last twenty-five years and local rates all over the country have increased 50 per cent. At the present time the Imperial burden of taxation amounts to £3 6s. 7d. per head of the population. Local indebtedness per head has increased, as well as Imperial indebtedness, by leaps and bounds. Local indebtedness in London has doubled in the last twenty-five years, and it now stands at £12 17s. 9d. per head as against £9 16s. 5d. per head in the country. In the whole country it has increased threefold within the last twenty-five years. These considerations drive me to the conclusion not only that it is most inequitable that in connection with this Budget four-fifths of the remission of taxation should be for the relief of direct taxpayers, and one-fifth for the benefit of indirect taxpayers, but, in view of the fact that one-third of the population is practically, owing to poverty, unable to bear any taxation whatever, it would have been much more equitable to have given four-fifths of the relief to the indirect taxpayers and only one-fifth to the wealthier direct taxpayers. In addition to the abolition of the corn tax, of which I heartily approve, and I consider that the House and the nation are much indebted to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the sound, firm, and unfaltering position he has maintained in regard to this remission. But with all deference, in view of these facts, I think relief would have been more equitably distributed were the Chancellor of the Exchequer to reduce the Income Tax only 2d. in the £ and devote the other 2d. to reducing the duty on tea by 2d. per pound, and abolishing that most flagrantly unjust coal tax.

With regard to the Income Tax the relief given in this case after all relieves that section of the community that least needs relief. What do the whole of the Income Tax payers amount to compared with the whole population? There are probably 800,000 or 900,000 persons paying Income Tax, or equal to about one-tenth of the population, and they possess one-half of the wealth of the country, estimated at about £1,600,000,000. The gross assessment of the Income Tax is in round figures £833,000,000. That sum is possessed by 800,000 people, and it furnishes an average income to every man, woman, and child included in that total, of £200 a year. When you divide the remaining national income amongst the rest of the community it shows that they possess about £18 each per annum. Therefore, I ask what would be equitable in the way of taxation between those possessing £200 and those possessing £18 a year? With regard to the corn tax, it is unnecessary, after the lengthened discussion which has taken place, for me to add my quota, but I heartily approve of the removal of the tax, on account of the fiscal changes which have been suggested. The Prime Minister said that he began to consider the necessity of fiscal changes in 1880, but in 1903 he remains still without any settled convictions on the subject. His process of conversion has been slow, and I hope it will be generations yet to come before either he or his successors are converted. I earnestly hope that at any rate we may feel that any proposal to tax the food of the people has now been relegated to the remote future.

I object to this Finance Bill because it does not provide for the abolition of the coal tax, and I think I can show that the coal tax is one which is absolutely unjust and indefensible. The coal tax violates the principle of equal incidence of taxation, and it is imposed upon one great industry only and upon a section only of that industry, and, further, no corresponding tax is placed upon other industries. It is a reversal of the fiscal policy of this country. We are told that this is a free trade Budget, but it cannot be so long as it continues the imposition of a tax which is worse than any protective tax. A protective tax might be imposed for the supposed benefit of the colonies, home producers, and manufacturers, but this is a tax imposed for the benefit only of foreign producers, and it handicaps British producers. Again, it is the only tax imposed upon any British export. Capitalists invested their money in coal mines believing that the fiscal policy of the country would remain undisturbed, and yet, out of the earnings they have gained by investment of capital and the work of the miners, and the providing of ships, the State has, under this tax, confiscated £2,200,000. A more flagrantly unjust imposition was never put on any industry, and how the present Chancellor of the Exchequer can continue it I fail to conceive. [AN HON. MEMBER: "Who pays it?"] The late Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the consumer abroad pays it, but I am glad to be able to give upon this point the opinion of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. who told us that the tax is not paid by the consumer.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): When?

*MR. JOSEPH WALTON: In your Budget speech. The right hon. Gentleman was good enough to send me a copy of it, and in it he says:—

> "The coal tax does not fall on the consumer. It has not injuriously affected the quantity of exports, and I do not propose to interfere with it."

Therefore the right hon. Gentleman declared that this tax would not fall on the consumer.

MR. RITCHIE: Not in this country. When I was speaking I was talking about the tax not falling upon the consumer in this country.

*MR. JOSEPH WALTON: I think I was entitled from what he said to conclude that he meant the consumer of the coal.

MR. RITCHIE: I was talking about the taxes borne by the consumer in this country.

*MR. JOSEPH WALTON: I accept fully the explanation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but I concluded that he meant the consumer of the coal. I desire to say that it does fall upon the producer of the coal and not upon the consumer. Upon this question I speak specially for the north of England, where the coal possesses no monopoly of markets. Our exports go to Germany, Holland, Belgium and France, and we have there to compete with foreign coal. Only a certain price is obtainable, and out of that price, by reason of this tax, we receive 1s. a ton less at the pit's mouth than if the tax had not been imposed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that no serious injury had been sustained by this tax. It is true that the great coal strike in America and France prevented the great diminution in our exports which would otherwise have taken place. But what are the facts? There has been a diminution in the exports of Durham, Northumberland, and Yorkshire coal to Germany, Holland, Belgium, and France of 2,600,000 tons in 1902 as compared with 1900. The exports to the north-eastern ports of Germany, Holland, Belgium, and France were 2,000,000 tons less in 1901 than in 1900. The German exports of coal to Holland, Belgium, and France increased by 1,154,802 tons in 1902 as compared with 1901. The north-eastern exports to the same continental nations decreased by 678,000 tons in 1902 as compared with 1901. Therefore, aided by the bounty given to the German competitors by the British Government, they not only took the whole of that 678,000 tons reduction in our trade which we sustained, but they took in addition an additional trade of 475,000 tons, a large proportion of which we should have secured had we not been handicapped by the British Government with this coal tax, which is a bounty in favour of the foreign producers. The results if we consider them as applying to Holland and Belgium are still more startling. From nearly 3,000,000 tons exported to Holland and Belgium in 1900, we have fallen in 1902 to 1,362,000 tons, whereas, compared with 1901, Germany has in 1902 increased her exports to those countries by 970,000. These illustrations show how the coal tax handicaps British coal owners in their competition in markets where they have to meet the competition of foreign coal owners.

I shall only detain the House by giving two illustrations of how far we are handicapped. They are concrete illustrations. We have supplied the Eastern Railway Company of France for years and years with the whole of their locomotive coal. Last year when the tenders were sent in British coal producers had to charge 1s. per ton to cover the export tax. The German coal producers had no such impost to add, and the result was that the contract for 150,000 tons for the first time for a generation went to the Westphalian coal producers, and was lost to the British coal trade. Just recently we were told by the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer that we had a monopoly in the north of England in the matter of gas coal. But recently we lost a contract of 100,000 tons for the Hague Gas-works. It was taken by Germany, and in addition to that I may tell the Chancellor of the Exchequer that within the last few weeks we have lost in the Rotterdam market still more important contracts, that have always been held by British coal owners and which have gone now to foreign competitors. This decrease of the export trade has taken place in spite of the unprecedented fall in shipping freights. Shipping freights between the north of England and the Continent, to places such as Hamburg, fell in 1901 5½d. per ton, and in 1902 9d. per ton, as compared with the average of the last ten years. To seven selected ports in the north of France the fall was 6d. in 1901 and 7½d. in 1902, and yet in spite of this we have lost ground to the extent I have described. The ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer said that great advantage was given to the British shipowner by reason of the fact that we allowed him to take any quantity of bunkers for ship's use free of export duty, but he ignored the fact altogether that the more bunkers he took the less cargo he took, and that therefore the earning power of the ship was diminished, while the State received no corresponding advantage in the matter of revenue. But the question does not affect the coal mining industry and the shipping industry only. If we have less exports to take out of this country in the shape of coal, we have fewer ships going abroad to bring back imports to this country for the benefit of the whole community. I know that it is proposed to increase the cost of imports to the British consumer, but at any rate so far as we are concerned we wish to be able to maintain them at a cheap rate in order to be able to compete successfully with protectionist nations and in protectionist markets.

Now the imposition of this tax was justified two years ago on the ground that the coal owners were making huge profits and could well afford to pay the tax. But the singular thing is that inland collieries were making greater profits than export collieries, and why in the name of all that is fair and reasonable this tax should be imposed on export collieries and not on inland collieries has yet to be answered. Take the case of two collieries in the Barnsley Division of Yorkshire. One colliery exports 240,000 tons of coal, and therefore pays under this tax to the extent of £12,000 a year, whereas the other colliery, two miles away, which does not export a single ton, does not pay one farthing of any corresponding tax. I am extremely sorry that the Return I moved for showing the wages and profits in coal mining should only have been issued this morning. I have not had time to go through it, and cannot make any reference to it to-day, but I venture to say to the House that the price of coal generally is enormously reduced in the last two years. Many classes of coal are only worth half to-day what they were worth two years ago. We have arrived at a situation in connection with the coal trade in which it is perfectly true to say that some collieries are working to-day at an actual loss, and some at only a nominal profit, and therefore to continue a huge charge of £2,200,000 on export collieries only, while no other industry in the country is subject to a corresponding tax, is an act of the most flagrant injustice. At any rate if this tax is to be continued it ought to be made an *ad valorem* duty. How absolutely absurd that coal only at the value of 6s. should be charged 1s. per ton export duty, and that coal worth 12s. per ton should only pay the same tax. Surely the imposition of an *ad valorem* duty, levied at the pit's mouth, would be the equitable system. But how much more ridiculous is the fact that it pays a coal owner better to sell coal at 5s. 11d. than 6s. 10d. If he sells at 6s. 10d. he has to pay the 1s. duty, but if he sells at 5s. 11d. he escapes it. A stronger proof of the absurdity of the way in which this tax is imposed you could not possibly have. It is absolutely unanswerable.

Then again they levy this duty on a free-on-board price, ignoring altogether that the rates charged to put coal free on board vary enormously. Supposing you sell coal free on board from a colliery that has a 2s. 7d. rate to the port of shipment at 6s. 1d., you receive the balance of 3s. 6d. and of this the State gets 1s. as coal duty, leaving 2s. 6d. to the coal owner. Supposing there is another export colliery from which the carriage to the port of shipment is 6d. per ton, the coal owner can take a contract over the head of his competitors at 5s. 11d., which leaves him with 5s. 5d. per ton, and on that he has no export tax whatever. Therefore in the case of two colliery owners producing in this country exactly the same class of coal, and selling to within 2d. per ton at the same price, one receives 5s. 5d. and the other 2s. 6d. for his coal. I think that nothing could demonstrate the unfairness of the way this tax is levied better than facts of this sort, which I venture to say are absolutely indisputable. If the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer had levied a 2d. tax on the whole of the coal production of the United Kingdom the tax would have raised more money, and if he had caused the royalty owners to pay 1d. of that, and the coal owners the other 1d., no great complaint would have arisen, because the royalty owners receive their rent on a sliding scale, and during years of inflation they receive an enormously augmented income on coal royalties. We were told when the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced the tax that one very desirable object in view was to prolong the life of the highest qualities of coal in the United Kingdom. The object of the colliery owners has always been to prolong the life of their best seams, and therefore they have worked the inferior and more expensive seams concurrently with the cheaper and better seams so long as they could make a profit. But what has been the consequence of this coal tax? It has been that as prices have fallen they have ceased working the more expensive and thinner seams, and concentrated upon working out more rapidly the more valuable and cheaper working seams. Therefore the object the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer had in view in imposing the tax is absolutely defeated, and the opposite result is being produced by the continuance of the tax. Really I must apologise to the House for going into this matter. It is a wide subject, and after all we did not have an opportunity of a general discussion on the introduction of the Budget, and therefore I am sure the Chancellor of the Exchequer does not at all object that we should review the whole of the financial provisions of His Majesty's Government for the present year.

The last point I desire to refer to is the fact that this coal tax has brought about a considerable reduction in the wages of coal miners. In the last two years the wages of coal miners in Northumberland have been reduced no less than 35 per cent., and in Durham 30 per cent., and as their wages are regulated by the selling price of coal at the pit, and as that selling price is reduced substantially when we deduct a shilling per ton for the duty on export coal, the miners throughout the country have had to bear a considerable share of the burden. And now, in face of these facts, and in face of the suggestions that they should pay more for their food supply in future, it is proposed that the tax should be continued. Well now, we have in the present financial year a surplus of ten and a-half millions sterling for the remission of taxation. I wonder if there is anyone in the House so sanguine as to believe that in the near future we shall have a similarly substantial surplus. Therefore it appears to me, so far as the abolition of the coal tax is concerned—the only tax levied on a British export in favour of the foreign producer—if we do not receive a remission of it this year there is small hope of doing so in years to come.

There are many other questions in connection with the Finance Bill that might be referred to. There is the question of the incidence of the Income Tax. I am glad to know that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is having a Commission on this important subject; and I hope it will lead to a further extension of the principle of a graduated Income Tax: that those having a comparatively small income up to £1,000 a year will have to pay less income tax in the future, and that in that way the burden of taxation will be made to fall equitably on all classes of the community. There are other sources of income open to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I should be glad if he could see his way to a taxation of land values and to the imposition of a penny on every £1 share transfer; and in addition to that I should earnestly desire a huge tax on motor-cars. They are most hideous in appearance, and largely occupied by people most fantastically dressed; they leave behind them, usually, a trail of polluted atmosphere; and they are becoming an increasing source of danger in the crowded London streets, both to men and beasts. I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer will take into serious consideration a tax on motor-cars so as to prevent their too rapid multiplication. But returning to my own particular question, the coal tax, I trust that before the Second Reading of the Finance Bill is ended the Chancellor of the Exchequer will give my proposal his serious and friendly consideration, and that we may have announced from him in his place in Parliament that he does recognise that this being a tax imposed upon one great export from this country—the only one, and which operates in favour of the foreign and colonial producer—it ought to be remitted. We hear a great deal in these days of giving a preference to our colonies; but at present we do give them many preferences, because we admit into this country their goods duty free while they exact duty on our goods; and we give in certain markets of the world a shilling per ton in favour of the Canadian and Australian coal producer to the detriment of the British coal producer. On all these grounds I submit to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he should adjust his taxation in a more equitable direction by the removal of the coal tax.

MR. COHEN (Islington, E.): I have no intention of entering upon such a general survey of the financial programme of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as has been indulged in by the hon. Member who has just sat down. But I am glad that the House, in the discussion of the Finance Bill, has, at any rate, at last reached the point when we can examine the financial proposals of the Government in their general aspect instead of confining and concentrating our attention on a very vital and important branch of these proposals, but still only a branch. I agree with a great many of the things which fell from my hon. friend opposite in the first part of his speech with regard to the National Debt. But, with all respect, I do not follow or agree with him in his observations about the coal trade, because, so far as I and a large number of persons in the country are concerned, the arguments which he adduced against the continuance of that tax were arguments which would lead to an opposite conclusion. We do not view with alarm, but with satisfaction, the diminution of the export of coal from this country. When the hon. Member informed us, with serious lamentation, that last year there had been a cessation of the consumption of coal from English sources by the great railway companies on the Continent, all I can tell him is that I believe in a great part of this country that cessation of the export of coal will be viewed with satisfaction—at all events, with equanimity.

MR. JOSEPH WALTON: That is selfishness.

MR. COHEN: I do not think that is a right and proper term to apply to a large section of the community. It is certainly an opprobrious one. We do not consider, when we want to preserve our coal for ourselves, that there should be a continuance of the undiminished fertility of our exports, at intense cost, of one of the staple necessities of life in this country. There was another observation which fell from the hon. Gentleman with which I do not agree; and that is about the Income Tax. The largest number of Income Tax payers are people who have a very direct and very urgent claim on the compassion and the sympathy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

*MR. JOSEPH WALTON: Hear, hear.

MR. COHEN: I am very glad my hon. friend agrees with that. I claim that the Income Tax payers deserve some consideration, not even in the interest of their own resources—serious and vital as that may be—but in the interest of the resources and the financial stability of this country. The Income Tax has always been treated—and ought to be treated—as a great reserve to which we can have recourse in times of stress and pressure and war. But directly that stress and pressure is over the Income Tax should be reduced to that level from which it can be speedily raised, and from which we can always draw that reserve which is the greatest financial resource this country possesses. I pass now from that portion of the hon. Gentleman's speech in which I differ from him. I am much more with him in his observations about the condition of the National Debt. That fills me, not exactly with alarm, but with considerable anxiety; and I am bound to say that, in my opinion, the financial proposals of the Government this year are not calculated to allay that anxiety. They do not seem to me to supply that provision for times of stress and pressure which it is binding on this country always to make when these times of stress and pressure cease to operate. The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave us, in his Budget speech, some very interesting and elaborate figures, and contrasted the condition of the Debt now with what it was when Sir Stafford Northcote established the New Sinking Fund in 1875. He told us that the amount of the Debt on that occasion was, by a happy coincidence, almost identical with what it was at the present moment. It was then £769,000,000, while it is now £770,000,000.

*MR. JOSEPH WALTON: £790,000,000.

MR. COHEN: The Chancellor of the Exchequer said £770,000,000. At any rate he said that the National Debt then and now was practically identical. But the constitution of the National Debt was then very different from now; and I shall refer to that difference in a moment or two. But there are figures applicable to a comparison of the two periods which are much more significant, and which do not show the same identity of total on these two occasions. In 1875-6 the national income was some £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 below £80,000,000. I think the exact amount was £78,000,000; and of that income Sir Stafford Northcote appropriated £28,000,000 for his New Sinking Fund. At the present time the Chancellor of the Exchequer disposes of an income of £144,270,000; and from that sum the Chancellor of the Exchequer provides £27,000,000 to the New Sinking Fund. I think the House will see that that amount contrasts very strikingly and not very favourably with the £28,000,000 in 1875-6.

But since Sir Stafford Northcote instituted the New Sinking Fund, a new system has grown up which, to my mind, constitutes, if not a great financial danger, at least a considerable financial inconvenience. We have now a system of Treasury bills which has grown up, which raises money which must be paid off in a very short time after the creation of the Bills; and we have a large amount of Treasury bonds in circulation, all of which mature at a fixed date. No one knows better than the Chancellor of the Exchequer that that is a process which has not always been economical, which has frequently been very costly, and at times been attended with inconvenience. I think from the Return moved for by my hon. friend the Member for Exeter we have an amount of terminable debt maturing within a very short time about which it would be very interesting if the House were given some information. The total amount of unfunded debt at the present moment is £75,133,000, and of that amount £30,000,000 is on account of the War Loan not due till 1910; so that, for the purpose of my present argument, that can be set on one side. There are £14,000,000 Exchequer Bonds not due until 1905, so that they may also be put on one side; and there are £10,000,000 bonds due on August 7th next. I do not press my right hon. friend to tell us in what way he is going to meet that pressing liability. I think it is conceivable—and from my City experience I think it likely—that to announce beforehand the way in which my right hon. friend is going to meet that £10,000,000, which he must meet in a little more than six weeks, might occasion inconvenience. That leaves an amount of £21,000,000 which I take it exists in Treasury bills. That is a very dangerous form for the liabilities of the National Exchequer to take. In 1898 the total amount of the unfunded debt of this country was £8,133,000; it has increased to £75,000,000 at the present moment. I do not believe, as the hon. Gentleman opposite suggested, that the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer, any more than the position of Prime Minister, is hereditary, and I hope that the tenure of office of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer will exist long after the unfunded debt has been cleared off. But I think it is the duty of a Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he be Conservative or Radical, to try and convert the pressing liabilities of the State in the form of unfunded debt as speedily as possible. I have very high authority for that opinion. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Monmouth, who everyone will admit was one of the greatest Chancellors of the Exchequer we have ever had—at any rate, that is my opinion—said on the 24th April, 1893—

> "I have a strong opinion that the less the Chancellor of the Exchequer is in the market the better, that the business of the country ought to be conducted on a large scale, and that to have to deal with bills of small amounts at intervals of three months is a thing to be avoided if possible."

That cannot be avoided in times of financial pressure and war. We must raise money for short periods, and the very fact of that necessity ought, in my judgment, to impose upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer the duty of funding as speedily as possible every portion of the unfunded debt that is capable of being extinguished. We know that the Government must hold, and does hold, some of these short dated securities, but the total amount of these unfunded securities should always be kept within such an amount as to leave very little possibility of their getting into the hands of the money market, so that it may not be within the power of the money market to cause inconvenience to the National Exchequer and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

MR. RITCHIE: Hear, hear!

MR. COHEN: I am glad my right hon. friend, whose experience is unrivalled in all these matters, appreciates the importance of that. Now I come to the second branch of my subject, namely, the Sinking Fund. We are in the habit of calling Sir Stafford Northcote's Fund the "New Sinking Fund." That was applicable when the Fund was first introduced and for a few years afterwards, but it has ceased to have its full force for a great many years. I do not think that we should call it the "New Sinking Fund," but rather the "Sinking Fund." I do not know what is likely to become of the old Sinking Fund. The old Sinking Fund was a capital thing in the old days of recurrent surpluses; but we are never now treated to such luxuries as surpluses. The operation of the old Sinking Fund does not conduce to economy; on the contrary, it almost invites extravagance. We have seen two forces at work which have contributed to the disappearance of surplus after surplus. One is that we have year after year a considerable increase in the number of Supplementary Estimates. I do not suggest that Supplementary Estimates are introduced because the Government wish to make a surplus disappear. I have too much faith in the vigilant eye of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to imagine anything of the kind; but certain it is that Supplementary Estimates can be provided for because of a surplus without causing inconvenience to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and, accordingly, the old Sinking Fund is invaded and tends to disappear. The other influence operating in the same direction is the intercepting of funds belonging to the Exchequer before they get into that holy of holies. We see funds intercepted which ought to be voted for the extinction of debt—and that system has increased of late years. My hon. friend the Member for King's Lynn has called attention to that several times. My right hon. friend the former Chancellor of the Exchequer defended — or perhaps excused would be the proper expression—the misappropriation—I do not think that is too strong a term—of those funds before they got into the Exchequer, with the result that the surplus which should have been appropriated to the extinction of debt disappeared gradually year after year. Consequently the only Sinking Fund available for the extinction of debt is Sir Stafford Northcote's fund, which has now been re-established. I called attention of the House to the fact that the proportion of £27,000,000 which the Chancellor of the Exchequer appropriates now is inferior to the amount which Sir Stafford Northcote applied in 1876. A half a million has been diverted from what should properly belong to the New Sinking Fund, and the amount was fixed at £27,000,000 instead of £27,500,000. A duty devolves upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which I do not think he has effectually borne in mind, of restoring the New Sinking Fund by an amount proportionate to the growth of the debt since the war. Having stated that, it may perhaps be expected of me to make suggestions which, however, I am sure my right hon. friend cannot now carry out. Personally, I do not want the corn tax remitted. I am not going into the thorny question of free trade versus protection. On that question I avow myself as ardent a free trader as my right hon. friend himself. I advocate the retention of the corn tax because I believed last year, and I still believe, that it does not violate the principle of free trade, which is sacred to me, and because the retention of that tax would have enabled us to devote £2,500,000 to the redemption of debt, which has always been a binding obligation on the House of Commons, but which, in my opinion, was never so binding as at the present moment, when we have increased the debt by something like £155,000,000. There is one thing I may say which I believe will increase the force of my argument. I am not one of those who believe in the reduction of national expenditure. Personally I do not wish to see our national expenditure reduced. We cannot reduce expenditure on the Navy; and I do not even know whether we can reduce expenditure on the Army. Therefore, as we cannot reduce our national expenditure, the duty is binding and urgent on us to energetically take in hand the reduction of the debt.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee): The Prime Minister told us the other day that neither the House nor the country cared three farthings whether the corn duty was in the Budget or not, and the aspect of the House at this moment is some testimony to the truth of that observation. We have had a very curious debate in the previous sittings on this Bill, in so far that we have been discussing an Amendment limited to the retention of the corn duty, and we have not touched the question under discussion. I do not desire to say anything on this question. I merely wish to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can give any explanation as to an alteration in his Budget statement which has caused some mystification. I had not the good fortune to hear the statement made, but I have read the authorised report published in *Hansard* and corrected by the right hon. Gentleman himself. The right hon. Gentleman has sent to me, and to all of us I suppose, a pamphlet copy of his statement, which, so far as the corn duty is concerned, differs as it seems to me from the speech delivered as reported in the newspapers and in *Hansard.* There has been a correction made in the pamphlet form of the statement, and whether it has any significance or not is the question I submit to the right hon. Gentleman. It may be that the alteration, although considerable, involving as it does the recasting of a whole sentence, is not meant to have significance. In the *Hansard* corrected report, the right hon. Gentleman, while speaking on the corn duty, is reported to have said, and he is also reported in *The Times* as saying—

> "I do not think it (the corn tax) can remain permanently an integral portion of our fiscal system unless there is some radical change in our economic circumstances, or it is connected with some boon much desired by the working classes."

The change made in the pamphlet involved the exclusion of a good many words, and the recasting of the whole sentence, so that I suppose the Chancellor of the Exchequer meant it to have some significance. It stated that the corn duty—

> "Cannot remain permanently an integral portion of our fiscal system unless in connection with some radical change in our economic policy."

In *Hansard* he said it could not be permanent unless there was some change in our economic circumstances; in his ultimate version he said it could not be permanently an integral portion of our fiscal system unless in connection with some radical change in our economic policy.

MR. RITCHIE: That is what I said. I did not personally correct the authorised Report in *Hansard.*

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The right hon. Gentleman has deemed it important to make a most elaborate correction involving a recasting of the whole sentence.

MR. RITCHIE was understood to dissent.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The Report in *The Times* also said "unless there is some radical change in our economic circumstances."

MR. RITCHIE: That is not what I said.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: Then the right hon. Gentleman has unfortunately been misreported both by *The Times* and by *Hansard*, but now we have the correct version before us at last, and the right hon. Gentleman does not say that change of circumstances is to be the justification for the imposition of the corn duty as a permanent part of the fiscal system, but that if there is to be a change in the fiscal system the fiscal policy must be changed altogether. The report is in question, and the doubt which has been cast on the position of so many Ministers, including members of the Cabinet, on this question is so great as to justify me in calling attention to what had struck me as an important alteration in what I must still regard as the authorised statement made on behalf of the Government on a question of policy.

MR. RITCHIE: I think it is only right to say, in order to make this matter perfectly plain, and as the hon. Gentleman speaks about my "corrected" statement, that the only statement which I have personally revised is in the pamphlet form in which it has been sent to the hon. Gentleman; and that pamphlet contains exactly the words I used. I was so particular as to the words I used that I read them out to the House, when I made my statement, from my memorandum, so that there can be no doubt about the fact.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: I should have said that the pamphlet version is said to be extracted from *The Parliamentary Debates* (*authorised edition*); on looking at which I find "circumstances" was the word used, whereas "policy" was used in what I regard now as the corrected edition. Therefore the right hon. Gentleman will admit that I was accurate in using the words "corrected edition" from that point of view.

Mr. RITCHIE: Certainly.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: Now I will pass from that. There is one very general topic which figures in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, and which has figured in the speech of his predecessors for many years, and which bulked very largely in the speech his predecessor made a few days ago. I allude to the remarks made on the subject of expenditure. I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his aspirations.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): More than aspirations. Intentions.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: We will not quarrel about a phrase. I thank him for his declarations, and I hope, if not this year, it may be possible to reduce the normal expenditure of the country. I listened with even more satisfaction, not unmingled with regret, to what was said by the right hon. Member for West Bristol the other day. He told us, as I understood, that had his remonstrances been received with a little more sympathy by his colleagues he might not be addressing the House from the place which he occupied. The right hon. Gentleman said he had protested for years against the increase in the normal expenditure of the country. I do not think that statement is altogether fair to his late colleagues, in view of the fact that although he protested against it, by remaining in office he assented to it.

But the right hon. Gentleman had made an appeal to the Prime Minister to give special attention to the enormous growth in the increase of another normal expenditure of the nation. What does that mean? Let the House consider for one moment where the chief growth of normal expenditure occurs, and what chance there is of checking it. In the Civil Service there has been a net increase of £2,000,000, attributable to the educational policy of last year. It is obvious that that cannot be reduced. The Revenue Department has increased by £700,000. I doubt whether in that item a satisfactory case can be made out for any reduction with regard to the Army; though there may be great waste in Army expenditure, there is practically no increase in the normal expenditure this year. In the Navy, however, the net increase has been £3,200,000,—an increase equal to the aggregate of all the other increases. If, therefore, the right hon. Member for West Bristol meant anything at all here was the opportunity for him to lead a campaign of economy in this House. What are the facts? We on this side have tried in vain to direct attention to the one item of naval expenditure which involved an increase of all the other items—namely, the Shipbuilding Vote, and without mercy have been voted down. Why are you asking £1,000,000 more for this Vote this year than last? That is a question which has been frequently put, and I venture to say that we have had no answer to it. It is an answer that can only come from the Prime Minister, or from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because it is a matter which depends on general policy. The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave in general terms what I suppose might be regarded as the justification of this increase when he said that, so long as other fleets grew, our Fleet must also grow in size. Now that is a question upon which we wish for further information. We want to know what fleets are growing, and what has happened in the way of a change of standard to justify the demand for this enormous increase in the Navy. I would receive with more satisfaction than I have done the protestations of different Chancellors of the Exchequer on this point if I found that they were willing to justify and defend the additional expenditure. Our complaint has been that our requests for explanation have been ignored. There will, however, be an opportunity later on of raising this point on the remaining portion of the Shipbuilding Vote, and I hope on that occasion we shall have the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol giving effect to his own declarations in favour of economy, and that we shall have from the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or somebody else entitled to speak for the policy of the whole Government, a reason for the great increase. As I shall have other occasions of calling the attention of the House to this topic, I will now pass on to another question.

There has been on these occasions a controversy, or rather a conflict, between the interests, or supposed interests, of the direct and the indirect taxpayer. I do not propose to go into that at any length now, but let me say at once that I do not accept the position which appears to be set up in certain quarters of this House, that justice is done if you merely balance indirect and direct taxation, and place them upon something like terms of equality. It is often said that if you raise as much money by indirect as you do by direct taxation justice is done. I do not, however, accept that theory. From my point of view, indirect taxation, so far as it affects the necessaries of life, involves an inevitable wrong and injustice, and there is no getting out of that. I will not repeat the assertion so often made, on the authority of an elaborate investigation, that one-third of our people are hardly getting a living wage. Undoubtedly an enormously large number of people in this country are far below the living wage line. They are people whose incomes do not admit of their being taxed at all; they are the poorest of the poor; they are the most helpless of the helpless; they are often women, who have no votes, and possibly have to provide for orphan children out of their various small means, and I venture to say that any additional burden placed upon them is a gross wrong. Any burden at all is, in fact, an unfair burden in their case, and so far as taxation goes, I adhere to the principle that you cannot have justice unless a person is first in possession of a living wage, and then you must only tax incomes above the living wage line in equal proportion to their amount. So long as you tax tea and sugar, and even beer and tobacco, you establish the claim of a large section of the community who cannot bear any taxation at all, for relief in the shape of old-age pensions, and I believe that many Members of this House will agree with that proposition. I want, further, to point out that this taxation which must involve injustice is made all the more galling to many of us, and all the more indefensible, by the fact that for years and years this House, under successive Governments—Governments belonging to both Parties—has levied this cruel taxation upon the poorest of the poor, while they know there exists untaxed sources of revenue which they refuse to apply to the benefit of the poor. That is a grievance under which both the direct and indirect taxpayers suffer. Not a single farthing additional on the Income Tax will I vote for so long as the Government shuts its eyes to the fact that there are great public values which must be used in relief of taxation, but which they refuse to touch at all.

I am going now to allude to one of the most undoubted cases of that kind. I refer to the endowment—for it is nothing else—out of public funds of one trade, namely, the licensed trade, and to the low duties attached to their monopoly. You have in the case of the licensed victuallers' trade a State monopoly. There never was a clearer case of monopoly. You have refused by law free trade in liquor, you have conferred the privilege of selling liquor upon a small and select class, and the moment you have created a monopoly of that sort, you have made it your bounden duty to take the full monopoly value so created for the use of the State. But you do not do that. The duties are so low that they are no tax at all, they are only an insignificant fraction, and that has been proved in a case which recently occurred showing the enormous value of this monopoly. It will be remembered that Lord Grey, for philanthropic reasons, applied for a licence for certain premises and obtained it, and that he was offered £10,000 for the property before he had spent a single penny upon it. Why was that offer made? It was made because it was well worth while for a speculator to get a bare chance of carrying on this business even on the limited scale on which it was proposed to be carried on. Our friend, the late Mr. Caine, whose absence from this House I am sure we all deplore, once had an estimate made of the annual value of the endowment of public-house licences arising out of the fact that the duties are so low, and the figures which were obtained established the fact that you might increase the revenue derived from these duties to £10,000,000 a year, whereas you only get about £1,500,000 now, and that even that £10,000,000 would not exhaust the monopoly value of the licences. If that is true, everything I have said is established as to your present system of annual endowment of a particular trade, and I for my part object not only to the indirect taxation continued by this Budget, but to the income tax and to every other tax so long as a source of public revenue like that is to be wasted as it now is upon a particular class.

What has been the official answer on this point? It is that the duties are given to the local authorities, and that therefore the State would not benefit from their increase, as they would only go to the local authority under the existing law. That is not what I propose. I propose that the true value of the licence should be taken, and that any excess over the amount now given to the local authority should be handed to the State in relief of Imperial taxation, and I believe that if that were done it would extend the revenue of this country to the extent of many millions. I, for one, will never vote for any tax proposed in this or any other Budget so long as this source of revenue is squandered. I would remind the House that the trade have not only, under existing circumstances, a vested interest in their licences, but they have a vested interest in the low rate of duty for which I can see no sort of foundation whatever, and therefore I do hope that some more just system of taxation will be decided upon, because one of the worst features in connection with the question of compensation which has been raised, and which has so long proved a bar to progress in this country, is materially affected by the imposition and maintenance of these very low duties. That is one of the worst endowments, but there is another which is a municipal monopoly to which the same reasoning may be applied. The taxation of land values has been adopted by practically the whole Liberal Party. I should propose to bring to the aid of the Exchequer also the endowments given to local authorities. That is a bad element in our finance. It does not tend to economy that the Exchequer should give endowments to local authorities in aid of municipal enterprises. But if you give effect to the principle of the taxation of land values, and hand the proceeds to the local authorities, then you may fairly ask them to give up the Imperial contributions, and thus you would receive a large addition to the national revenue. I object more to indirect than to direct taxation; I object most of all to taxation on the necessaries of life. I object to all these taxes so long as a single national endowment, not derived from taxation, is unutilised.

*SIR EDGAR VINCENT (Exeter): There was nothing in the plain statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer the other day which I admired more than his declaration of the supreme importance to the country of the maintenance of her national credit. He fully endorsed the view which I have ventured to set forward, that among the elements and factors of the strength of this country in any international contest the power of the national credit is one of the greatest and most essential. But while I agree with all that he said on that subject, I venture very respectfully to differ from him as to the conclusions which he drew respecting the present position of affairs. He said we might joyfully look aside from the gloomy prognostications which had been made regarding the present level of Consols. I venture to think that events which have occurred since he spoke, rather justify the view of a less optimistic character which

I have expressed. We have heard a great deal about the success of the Transvaal loan. While I fully admit that the Chancellor of the Exchequer used with extreme skill all the elements in the situation favourable to himself—I am the last to criticise anything he did with respect to that issue—I venture to say that a 3 per cent. loan issued under the guarantee of the British Government at 99 is not a satisfactory line upon which the English Government, or the Colonial Governments supported by the English guarantee, can raise money. A 3 per cent. loan at 99 corresponds to a 2½ per cent. issue at 83. [Mr. RITCHIE dissented as to the issue price being 99.] However, I will not argue that point, but a 3 per cent. loan at par corresponds to a 2½ per cent. issue at a little above 83. Comparing that with the level which was anticipated for the national credit at the time of the great conversion of Lord Goschen, I submit that the whole of our ideas respecting national credit have had to come down. I view it in this way. We hear a great deal with respect to the unpreparedness of the country regarding military armaments for naval organisation in case of war. I say that you must also be prepared equally with regard to your national finance. You must be in such a position that if war or any unforeseen crisis comes upon you, you will be able to raise the funds necessary to the making of war rapidly and cheaply. In this issue what occurs? The level at which the stock was offered to the public was extremely low. It was subscribed for very largely, but I think to an unprecedented extent by those who did not intend to be ultimate investors. I think the City of London has never witnessed such a remarkable example of "stagging." People wrote for large lines of stock who were altogether unprepared to keep the stock which was allotted to them, and who are only waiting for the opportunity to get rid of it. In addition to that, we had the assistance of foreign capital and foreign bankers to a very large and almost dangerous extent.

I venture, therefore, to urge most strongly upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he should devote his energy and determination largely to the point of improving the level at which our national funds now stand. There is one way by which he can arrive at this end, and that is by a large endowment of the Sinking Fund. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has claimed that the amount which he proposes to allot to the Sinking Fund in the present year is equivalent to the amount allotted to it by Sir Stafford Northcote. I venture to think that the hon. Member for Islington was perfectly right in saying that the amount allotted to the Sinking Fund ought to bear some proportion to the total amount of the revenue and the expenditure of the country. Regarded from this point of view, the amount which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has set aside, even if we take into consideration the further sum which will come to the Sinking Fund in the course of the next few years, is certainly not an excessive nor even an adequate amount. Passing from the general consideration of the theory of the question, I would very respectfully submit to the House that it would have been better finance, although perhaps not so good electioneering, to have reduced the Income Tax by a penny less, and given the £2,500,000 which the additional penny would have produced to the Sinking Fund. I am sure the Chancellor of the Exchequer is above being guided by electioneering considerations, and I am convinced that the common sense of the people of this country is such that they will always support whatever measures may be required to maintain the credit of the country if put forward through respected and official channels. Then there is another point which has powerfully influenced the money market in its depreciation. Of late years the practice has arisen of providing for certain expenditure by means outside the annual account. In the course of the last ten years I believe a total amount of £27,000,000 has been raised from credit in order to meet what has been termed capital expenditure. The purposes for which this money has been raised are the Telegraphs Act, the Naval Works Acts, the Military Works Acts, the Land Registry New Building Act, the Pacific Cable Act, and the Uganda Railway. When this practice was first commenced it was justified on the ground that expenditure of this kind was of an exceptional and extraordinary character, and would not recur. What has happened? So far from diminishing, the sum provided by credit and not met in the annual Budget has increased every year, and the Budgets of future years are already laid under contribution to a large amount under this head. I submit that this expenditure is absolutely indistinguishable from the extraordinary Budgets which in foreign countries have wrought such harm to the finances. Whereas, however, in France the Minister of Finance always endeavoured to prove that the extraordinary expenditure which he provided for would be remunerative, here it is obvious that a large amount of the expenditure will remain unproductive. Can it be contended that we are justified in basing these demands for money in an extraordinary Budget on the ground that they are not likely to recur? It appears to me absolutely certain that in the history of a great Empire, such as ours, with its varying and widespread liabilities and responsibilities, expenditure precisely similar in character to that provided for under these capital issues will come upon us every year, and I submit that the only sound and legitimate method of meeting this expenditure is to pay for it by revenue.

Another practice which appears to be on the increase, and which is not free from danger and objection, is the habit of ear-marking certain sources of revenue and attributing them to special expenditure. The traditional system of finance in this country, and the only proper system, is to have one general account into which all the expenditure and revenue of the country goes. Any departure from that system, whatever may be the motives, and however honest the Minister who proposes it, will invariably lead in course of time to concealment from this House and the public of the real state of the finances.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): It does now.

*SIR EDGAR VINCENT: My hon. friend says it does now. Well, whatever may be the case actually, in every country where this system has been adopted it has led to disastrous finance, and to the removal from public scrutiny of many financial matters on which the fullest light is always required. In other respects the position of affairs to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has succeeded does not seem to me quite satisfactory. The opinion is gaining ground, and is, I think, thoroughly justified, that Parliamentary control over expenditure at the present time is altogether superficial, and, so far as practical results are concerned, is almost non-existent. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will take up this subject both as to the amount, of expenditure and as to its control with thoroughness and with a determination to put matters on a more satisfactory basis. Of late years we have had large increases of expenditure in every Budget. I will not discuss now the question of whether or not those increases were necessary, but I would say that it is almost in the nature of a necessary consequence that extravagance has crept in with the rapid increase of the Estimates. In any private business, where large additional charges have grown up, owing to extension of business or any other cause, an extraordinary and special revision of those additional charges is made by a prudent administrator, and now, when, as I hope, we have reached the end of the expansive period of our expenditure, I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to take the matter in hand personally, and to make a special revision with a view to cutting down all that is redundant, and all for which the country is not receiving the fullest value. Certain expenditure is not only large, but has got out of hand. Things cannot go on in the present way. Although it may be presumptuous to hope that where the late Chancellor of the Exchequer was unable, as he told us, to achieve complete success, anyone else can succeed, yet I would appeal to my right hon. friend not to be deterred by the magnitude and difficulty of the task, but to set about it vigorously and soon.

Mr. POWER (Waterford, E.): The duty of the Irish Members in regard to this Bill naturally is to give every facility to the Government to proceed with their land legislation for Ireland, but it must not be taken from the silence of Irish Members that they are indifferent to the interests involved in this Budget and in the financial condition of this country. Unfortunately, we have too great an interest in the Budget because we are asked to pay a sum which is more than Ireland should be justly called upon to pay. The two great spending Departments are the Army and the Navy. With regard to the Army expenditure, in no uncertain voice we have cried out against that expenditure and recorded our opinions and votes with regard to the objects to which that money is devoted. With regard to the Navy expenditure, none of those vast sums of money are expended in Ireland, and in this respect we have been crying in the wilderness for many years, merely to endeavour to obtain a few little launches to protect our fisheries. Nevertheless the Government gave some assistance in this respect to Scotland to protect their fisheries. With regard to the naval expenditure, we have little or no interest in it, and the colonies have very much more interest in the Navy than Ireland has. The colonies have a large trade to be protected, and, in justice, they should be called upon to pay something towards the maintenance of the Navy, which would be something in the nature of an insurance on their trade. Ireland has no trade to protect, because this country took great care to crush out Irish industries in times past. Consequently to-day we have little or no trade interests to protect in Ireland. With regard to the debate that has taken place on this Bill, most people will acknowledge that this country has progressed enormously under the state of things prevailing here under the present fiscal system. This country has an ever increasing population, and no doubt the present system of trade has worked well for such a large consuming population as you have in this country. To my mind it is very doubtful whether this fiscal system has done so well in Ireland; on the contrary, I am inclined to think that it has done us great harm, and in corroboration of that view allow me to quote a few words that were used by a gentleman of high repute in this House—Mr. Childers, who was at one time Chancellor of the Exchequer and a confirmed free trader, who advocated his principles with great ability, and who certainly defended the details of his administration with conspicuous lucidity. What did Mr. Childers say with regard to Ireland in reference to the present fiscal system? He used these words—

> "It may even perhaps be said that just as Ireland suffered in the last century from the protective and exclusive commercial policy of Great Britain, so she has been at a disadvantage in this century from the adoption of an almost unqualified free trade policy for the United Kingdom."

Those were the words used by a confirmed free trader, and he acknowledged that, owing to our position, the laws which affected England affected Ireland in a different way.

The free trade policy has not worked well for Ireland, and certainly from an industrial point of view the protective duties that you put on killed our industries. Let me make another quotation from an eminent authority on this subject, and from an authority who was recently quoted by the Chief Secretary for Ireland in one of the speeches he delivered in the south of England. The words are from Lord Dufferin's speech, and he says—

> "From Queen Elizabeth's reign until the Union various commercial confraternities of Great Britain never for a moment relaxed their relentless grip on the trade of Ireland. One by one each of our nascent industries was either strangled in its birth, or handed over, gagged and bound, to the jealous custody of its rival interest in England, until at last every fountain of wealth was hermetically sealed, and even the tradition of commercial enterprise perished through desuetude. What has been the consequence of such a system pursued with relentless pertinacity for 250 years? Debarred from every other trade and industry, the entire nation flung itself back upon the land with as fatal an impulse as when a river whose current is suddenly impeded rolls back and drowns the valley it once fertilised."

Those are the words used by Lord Dufferin and quoted with approval by the Chief Secretary for Ireland in one of his recent speeches. This quotation confirms my contention that the laws, which, from an industrial and agricultural point of view serve this country, may inflict irreparable harm upon Ireland. If you look at Irish history, the protection we want industrially is not protection against the so-called foreigner, but protection against our near neighbour England, which has destroyed our industries. My principal object in rising to address a few words to the House on this Finance Bill, was to elicit an answer from the Secretary to the Treasury or the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Some weeks ago† my hon. friend the Member for the Ossory Division of Queen's County addressed this Question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer—

> "I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will arrange that millers who hold stocks of imported grain, or products thereof, on 1st April, upon which duty has been paid by themselves or others, will be allowed a refund of that duty."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that it was not practicable to carry out the suggestion conveyed in the question of my hon. friend. I cannot see why it is not practicable to carry out the suggestion. It is only a few nights since a discussion took place as to the retention of the officers it was necessary to employ in connection with this corn duty. I think this staff could not be better employed than in endeavouring to give a rebate or a refund to those who are duly entitled to a refund under the terms of this Finance Bill. I am well aware that there are some difficulties in so doing, and that it will require a certain amount of care and industry to do so. At the same time I maintain that it is the duty of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Government to see that the individual does not suffer, and the difficulty thrown on officials, after all, is not an excuse to offer in defence of the public not getting their rights in this matter. In April, 1880, Mr. Gladstone brought in a Budget Bill in which he proposed to take off the duty on malt. The proposal was not to become effective until the following October. In the last week of September of that year a staff of officers went round and examined the different malthouses, and wherever malt was stored, with the result that within a few weeks, without friction, a refund was made to everyone who was entitled to it, though the condition of things then was very much more difficult than at present. Malt was held then in a great many more places than corn is held now, and it was more difficult to assess. Nevertheless, a staff was employed and a proper rebate was made in every case. I wonder why such action cannot be taken in the present case. I know that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has gone a long way to meet the views that have been put forward by those who represent the millers of this country and Ireland, but he has left out of calculation the smaller people, and by far the poorest people, those to whom this sum would be of considerable importance. I believe that in cases where the tax does not amount to over £25, little or nothing is done for these people. I know this is a Customs duty, and that there may be some difficulty in dealing with it through the Customs officers, but with extra staff I think the work could be satisfactorily done.

We have had occasion from time to time to approach the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the various positions he formerly occupied. We have approached him when he was at the Board of Trade, the Local Government Board, and the Home Office; and I have to acknowledge that he always met the claims we ventured to put before him in a reasonable spirit, and showed a desire to meet our wishes so far as he could consistently with the duties of his position. He has been in Ireland recently, and I venture to hope that so far from that visit making him less sympathetic, it will increase his sympathies, because he, like every stranger who visits the country, must have been appalled by what he observed there. The position of the corn millers in Ireland differs very much from that of corn holders and millers in this country. Here you have large ports and you are able continually to renew your supplies, but in out-of-the-way places in Ireland you have to lay in a larger stock than people would do in this country, and consequently it is more likely that these people will have a greater amount of corn, on which duty has been paid, at the end of this month than men situated in England are likely to have. My principal object in rising was to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to give favourable consideration to this matter. I hope it will not be necessary for me or my friend the Member for the Ossory Division of Queen's County to put down an Amendment in the Committee stage with reference to this matter. It is a matter of little or no consequence to the Treasury, but it is of considerable consequence to the people of Ireland. I hope the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury will communicate what I have said to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I certainly recommend it to the favourable consideration of the Treasury on the ground of justice.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxi. 1371.

*MAJOR EVANS GORDON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): We heard a remarkable statement from the late Chancellor of the Exchequer the other day—it was a somewhat belated statement as to the real reason for his resignation—that the constant protests he had made to his colleagues with regard to the extravagance of the administration had not been listened to, and he especially referred to the extravagance of the administration of the Army. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer has also hinted that economies might be effected in the Army. I am sure we shall be glad to know what steps he proposes to take in this direction. It is all very well throwing away £2,500,000 of revenue, but it is much more difficult to make economies in such matters as Army administration; and if time permitted I could point out to the right hon. Gentleman various matters to which he might give his attention in order that those most desirable reforms should be effected. We should be glad to know, if he is unable to impress his colleagues with the necessity for such steps, and if not, whether he, too, will resign, and give us his reasons for doing so. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave us another very remarkable hint when introducing the Budget. I refer to the question of the collection of the Income Tax. He gave us some startling information with regard to the manner in which that tax is evaded. In fact, he told us that the net which is cast about the taxpayers is full of holes, and that some of the most valuable fish escape altogether. I have a most profound disbelief in the honesty of human nature in regard to matters connected with the taxpayer. If, for instance, there were no Customhouse officers to examine baggage on arrival in this country, how many portmanteaux would come here laden with cigars and other contraband. The Income Tax, or a large portion of it, as at present collected is like a Customs duty, without any Customs officers. Leaving out of consideration those who are taxed automatically, and whose honesty is made for them by the State, there are a number who are free to make any statement they like regarding the amount of their income. It is unnecessary to enter into the details of the system. In London forms are distributed about this time of year by the local surveyor to persons who have to pay the tax. They are supposed to calculate their average profit of the last three years, and, having ascertained this, they make a return which may be honest or not. If the surveyor is satisfied, the assessment is made accordingly; if not, a case can be stated before the Income Tax Commissioners who sit as Judges between the surveyor and the taxpayer. The person appealed against makes a statement on oath with respect to the amount of his profits. It may be that he can be called upon to produce his books in order to substantiate his statement, but I am not aware of this provision, and as a matter of fact books are never called for, and the statement of the person is accepted on oath. The penalty for a mistatement is a £20 fine and three times the duty which should have been paid. It will be observed there is no compulsion whatever for a man to make any statement with regard to his income. He can imitate a certain class of cabmen, and say to the surveyor "I leave it to you." This in many cases is done. It is often extremely profitable to do so, as witness the case quoted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, where a man was assessed on £5,000, and when subsequently assessed on £50,000 the tax was readily paid without protest.

There are all sorts of other evasions. If I buy shares at £1 and sell in a month's time at £2 there is a profit which should really be taxed and come into the net of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I should be called upon to pay on the profit thus received, but how many thousands of transactions such as this escape taxation altogether? Then there are flotations in the City—flotations of a most questionable character, constantly brought out without prospectus—companies with registration in Johannesburg, whose shares are quoted at an enormous premium, and on which immense profits must be realised. I should like to know whether gentlemen well known in the City who conduct this class of business are likely to state what their real profits for the year have been.

There is also the question of foreign bonds. It is currently believed that people invest in foreign securities and keep them abroad and escape income tax on this part of their income altogether. Then there is a class of traders, chiefly of foreign extraction, who keep no books whatever, and whose profits are consequently never known and never stated. It cannot be supposed that such people as these will give an honest return of their income. The system seems to me to be one much needing revision and careful examination. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has told us that he only needs encouragement, and points out that the whole matter should be thoroughly revised and threshed out. Such a system as we possess would not be tolerated in any other country. The inquiry in Germany is of the most rigid character. Every person in the country has to fill in a complete schedule, showing every source of income for the year. That is a perfectly fair method. If a man has had a good year, he should gladly pay income tax upon it, and if he has had a bad year he has only to state it and his income tax is reduced accordingly. I would recommend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he has not already done so, to study the German system, which prevents the constant fraud and evasion which goes on in this country. A man, with whose circumstances I am acquainted, in a town in Germany was recently suspected of having understated his income, and inquiry was made. It was found that he had understated it, and he was promptly fined 200,000 marks or £10,000. I think he will be more careful in future as to the return he makes. The imposition of a swingeing fine on those who mis-state their incomes in this country would be to the benefit of the revenue, and it would have a stimulating effect on the honesty of people who have to make Income Tax returns. The Chancellor of the Exchequer himself estimates that if incomes were accurately stated and the tax reduced twopence in the pound, the same revenue as at present derived would be received.

MR. RITCHIE: I said that had been stated.

*MAJOR EVANS GORDON: I believe from inquiries I have made that that estimate is well within the mark, and it is a hopeful source of increased revenue, at all events, which I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer will not neglect. I trust that before this debate concludes, other hon. Members will add some words to the humble encouragement I wish to give to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to look thoroughly into this matter.

*MR. MOON (St. Pancras, N.): Four weeks ago it was relatively simple for an ordinary member of the Unionist Party to decide how to vote on the whole or any part of the Finance Bill. It might have seemed weak and unnecessary to remit the corn-tax, but weaker still to re-impose it, and therefore many of us abstained from attending the deputation, and still more voted against the Amendment. However, a great deal has happened since then, and even in the last few days The small contribution I shall make to this discussion will be as to the position of the colonies. The telegrams from the Prime Ministers and Governors have given point to the Resolutions which were passed at the Colonial Conference last year, and with which hon. Members are familiar. They have given point to the feeling which has been experienced in this country at the treatment Germany has meted out to Canada for her loyalty and for trying to help the mother country. I cannot help thinking that the colonies may feel that the vote of this House on the Amendment moved by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford, which was only supported by twenty-four, was an indication that their views are being neglected. The First Lord in his speech on Wednesday night said that hon. and right hon. Gentlemen had been occupied in conjuring up real or imaginary Budgets for the year 1905, 1906, and 1907. I venture to say that we must consider how the attitude we take up now will affect our position in the future, and I should like to claim for myself—and I think there are other hon. friends in the same position—to reserve free liberty of action, if after the discussion and inquiry promised by my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer there seems to be ground to believe that the scheme of the Secretary for the Colonies may prove to be beneficial to the Empire.

*MR. BLACK (Banffshire): Whether the Government is a government of fixed conviction and policy or of no settled convictions, or whether it follows the lead without light, of the Colonial Secretary, or the light without leading of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or whether it wobbles about in the chaotic nebula of nebulous chaos offered by the Prime Minister, it has one fixed practice at all events, and that is whether in or out of office to look after the friends on which it depends for support. I refer particularly to the tithe of the population represented by the Income Tax payers. I venture to call the Chancellor of the Exchequer's attention to the extraordinary character of the remission of taxation proposed in his Budget. It is really more extraordinary and more striking in its partiality than was the imposition itself. What do we find in regard to the proportion of direct and indirect taxation remitted? We find that while the direct taxation remitted is a real remission, the indirect taxation remitted is no remission at all. What did the Chancellor of the Exchequer bring out in his statement? He brought out that from Customs and Excise he had an additional revenue in the year in which we now are, as compared with last year, of about £3,000,000, so that, in remitting the corn duty, representing about £2,000,000, he has not taken off a single penny from the duties on the food of the people and their daily requirements, but, on the contrary he has added £1,000,000 in the present Budget. I think that is a feature of the Budget which requires explanation, and which will be very difficult to explain away. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in response to a request by the hon. Member for Poplar, issued a statement which contains some most valuable figures as to what the normal increase in the expenditure of the country has been as compared with the normal income with peace taxation in 1899–1900. It will be found on referring to the ordinary expenditure that it has increased from £110,000,000 to £129,000,000, while the ordinary revenue, apart from the extra taxation imposed for the war has remained nearly stationary, so that in 1902–3 there was a balance of ordinary expenditure to be provided for by extra taxation of £11,000,000. To that falls to be added the £3,000,000 extra expenditure on the Navy, £2,000,000 extra expenditure for education—altogether an extra expenditure for the current year of about £16,000,000. How has that been provided? It has been wholly provided by new taxation from the food and ordinary requirements of the people. Under the Chancellor of the Exchequer's own hand we find that from the duties on tobacco, spirits, sugar, coal, corn and flour by means of extra taxation imposed since the beginning of the war in the year 1899–1900, he derived £12,500,000, and from Excise £2,500,000. Altogether, £15,000,000 has been derived from extra taxation imposed since the commencement of the war. To that has to be added £3,000,000 he derives from extra Customs duty during the current year, making £18,000,000. When you deduct from that amount £2,000,000 in respect of the remission of the corn tax, there remains a balance of £16,000,000 imposed ostensibly for the conduct of the war, but which apparently is to be kept a permanent charge on the people. What does it matter to anybody in this House whether 2d. or 4d. is taken off the income tax? I venture to say there are not two Members in the House who would grudge the keeping on of 2d. if it was to make the poor more comfortable. I hope that before the debate closes we shall have some explanation from the Chancellor of the Exchequer why it is that he requires from the poor and starving people, from the submerged third of the population, this immense contribution to the ordinary increase in the expenditure of the country, while he allows other quite available subjects of taxation to go free. Perhaps he will say, as he said the other day, that it is necessary to allow the poor to bear that burden in order that they may feel their responsibilities. We have heard a great deal of fly-blown phylacteries, but was there ever a more moth-eaten phylactery than that? Don't they supply the *personnel* of the Army and Navy? But even if it be a good argument, I say this: If you take this money out of their pockets as you do, then you should certainly return it in the shape of old-age pensions instead of holding such pensions out as a possible result of the complete recasting of our fiscal system.

Another matter which requires urgent attention is provision for the Sinking Fund. By the regrettable war the permanent debt of this country has been increased £150,000,000. What did we find the Chancellor of the Exchequer saying in 1899, when the war was beginning? He said—

> "I hope no one will suggest that this is a case in which the expenditure for the war should be provided for by a permanent addition to the Debt of the country. To my mind no such permanent addition would be justified except, of course, in the event which I hope we shall never see in my time, that of a war with a first-class Power."

That was the programme with which the Government started in 1899. Contrast that with the fulfilment the Chancellor of the Exchequer offers us in the shape of a Sinking Fund on its present scale. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in introducing this Budget said that the Sinking Fund in 1899–1900 was £5,800,000, or ·92 per cent. of the Debt. On the 31st March last the Debt was £770,000,000, and the Sinking Fund £6,600,000, or ·85 per cent. of the Debt. In place of having an additional percentage we have a less percentage by way of Sinking Fund, which is a very extraordinary contrast. I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer will offer a sufficient explanation of it, if he can. He may say, "What about the repayment by the Transvaal?" That repayment is a sham and a delusion, if the necessary expenditure for holding the Transvaal is taken into consideration. The Minister for War told us that the maintenance of troops in the Transvaal cost £4,000,000 a year, which will absorb all the surplus revenue from the Transvaal without imposing a charge for repayment to this country of war expenditure, and will cost us £2,500,000 more, so that the raising of £30,000,000 on the revenues of the Transvaal implies that we are really appropriating for the service of that debt monies which would be more profitably employed in relieving this country of some part of the expense of maintaining the Army in the Transvaal. These are weighty facts which the country ought to consider. This war has not added to our resources. What do the money markets of the world say? "We will only give you ninety for what we gave you 114 a few years ago." Suppose we were embarked on a great European war—which heaven forbid! but which might happen any day—we should be in a very bad way. We are doing nothing to conserve our resources. We are in a period of great prosperity, and surely at such a period the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to make a very largely increased provision for the Sinking Fund, instead of reducing it below what it was in 1900. We have added nothing to our assets, but much to our liabilities; and consequently we are leaving to posterity a burden which we should not call upon posterity to bear.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES: The subject of the Finance Bill is always of great importance, but it is more important than ever on this occasion, because this year there has been no general discussion whatever on the financial position of the country. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in introducing this Budget took advantage of the simplicity of the House by barring that out, but the right hon. Gentleman consoled us by promising full opportunity for discussion on the Second Reading of the Finance Bill. This opportunity has now arrived. I regret the absence of my right hon. friend the Member for West Monmouth, who would have brought to the consideration of this Budget the great knowledge and experience and financial skill which he has always shown in discussing the financial position of the country. To regret the apparent indifference of His Majesty's Government would be, perhaps, uncourteous, seeing that there are two representatives of the Government on the Treasury Bench. To the absence of other Members of His Majesty's Government we are becoming quite accustomed. I will only express the hope that the First Lord of the Treasury, the First Lord of the Department especially concerned with finance, will put in an appearance towards the close of the debate. We have now got rid of the Amendment in regard to the corn duty, and we are now in presence of the Bill which embodies the whole finance of the year, and which raises, in its form and in itself, the whole fiscal system of the country as it exists. Every tax imposed, whether by this Bill or by previous Acts, is now under review. I propose, however, to keep strictly within the limits of the Bill, whose Second Reading we are now discussing. There are three new features in this Bill, and three only. One concerns the Sinking Fund, another is that which deals with Income Tax, which I shall not touch upon, and the third the clause which deals with the duty on corn. Let me say one word on that in passing. This clause discloses some want of continuity of purpose in His Majesty's Government, and some vacillation. Last year they sacrificed free trade to registration — that is the name now given to it. This year they sacrifice registration to free trade. Next year they will sacrifice free trade to preferential duties; and the following year they will sacrifice preferential duties to frank protection. [Mr. RITCHIE: "A regular rake's progress."] I adopt that phrase. It is an exact description. That is the course we are promised. I do not propose to dwell upon that, but to say simply that this is a very serious position. At the present moment the Tory Party is as much committed to free trade as sixty years ago it was committed to protection; and if there is to be a great revolutionary change in the fiscal policy of the country, we must have proper notice of it, and be properly asked to sanction it. For my own part, and for not a few on this side as well, I must say that, whether we are for free trade or not, we are for free food; and if the Colonial Secretary proposes in this House, or elsewhere, to put a high tax on the food of the United Kingdom, we should not be long behind him; we of the Free Food Tory Party who believe in cheap food for the people shall enter upon the discussion to which he and the Prime Minister have invited us.

The expenditure for which this Bill provides is, I venture to say, not only vast but unwarrantable; it is as wasteful as it is stupendous. It is growing, and so far as I can gather from the declaration of the Government, it is likely still further to grow. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol has told us that his representations to his late colleagues in favour of economy were received with indifference. The right hon. Gentleman also stated, as a general principle, that no Chancellor of the Exchequer could secure the approval of his colleagues for economy unless he had the warm and constant support of the Prime Minister, and he added that had he found more sympathy with his desire for economy he might not have addressed the House from the Bench behind me. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that my right hon. friend did not get the support in this matter of the Prime Minister. That is confirmed by the Prime Minister's statement on his own behalf. He said we must consider whether we should not raise revenue for other purposes than those of national expenditure. In addition to that the Colonial Secretary has suggested that we may adopt a policy, on which I do not now enter, by which we shall raise a very large revenue from taxes on the food of the people, revenue which we do not want for the normal expenditure of the country, and which will consequently leave a large sum at our disposal. Here you have the First Lord of the Treasury and the Colonial Secretary adumbrating a large increase of revenue, not required for the expenses of the year, but for other purposes. When that happens, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be in the position of having more revenue than he can possibly use; he will be in the position of the man who found a biscuit, and then went about trying to buy a dog to give it to. However that may be, this prospect, held forth to us by two of the principal Ministers of the Cabinet, certainly promises no diminution, but rather an increase of our expenditure. I appeal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. That right hon. Gentleman has promised to do all he can to reduce expenditure; his colleagues have promised to do all they can to increase revenue. But when the Chancellor of the Exchequer gets this increased revenue, he will soon find means and ways of increased expenditure. We cannot discuss the scheme so adumbrated now. We know that there are four essential points, which I do not even name, that to my mind render that scheme altogether impracticable. The Prime Minister says that the question is one which requires to be discussed, and investigated. The proper place to discuss, to investigate, to inform the mind of the nation, is this House. If the right hon. Gentleman's desire for information is honest—as I have no doubt it is—he will certainly afford the House an opportunity of discussing the matter in such a way as will not involve a vote of confidence in the Government, but will add to the information at our disposal. In any case, it will be discussed in the country, and those Tories who believe in free food will be on the platform conducting the discussion which the Prime Minister desires and invites. There is no want of loyalty in acceding to the request of our chief; we have confidence in him, we have no intention of deserting him, and we earnestly hope that he will not desert us.

The present expenditure is, as I have said, vast, unwarrantable, and most wasteful. Let me ask the House to realise what the amount is, for I am certain that very few Members have any conception, and I sometimes doubt whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer has any conception, of the real amount. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has stated that the expenditure for the current year is £143,900,000, and for last year £185,400,000. That is a statement which the Chancellor of the Exchequer put forth to the House when presenting his Budget But that statement is absolutely untrue and misleading to the extent of merely £30,000,000. The Chancellor of the Exchequer says that the expenditure last year was £185,400,000, but to this you have got to add the amount levied and paid over to the local taxation account—£9,700,000—which does not appear on either side of the account. You have also got to add appropriations-in-aid; that is to say, the sums received by various Departments (including £1,500,000 from India), and retained by these Departments and expended for their own needs, instead of being paid back into the Exchequer as they should be. These amount to £13,300,000, which also appears on neither side of the account. Let me dwell for a moment on the nature of these appropriations-in-aid and the control which the House has over them. They do not form any part of any of the sums voted by the Committee of Supply. It is true that they appear in a Memorandum, and that they are to be deducted from the gross amount to be voted in Committee of Supply. But they are not voted nor has the Committee any control over them. The result is that the whole of this £13,300,000 absolutely escapes the control of the House. It has been ruled by the Chairman of Committees that you cannot increase or decrease it in any way. The Chairman of Committees is quite correct in that ruling, for these appropriations in-aid are charged by the Treasury on the nation under various Finance Acts giving the Treasury the power to apply these appropriations in aid, and the result is that they entirely escape the control of the House, in defiance of the Exchequer and Audit Act of 1866. That is not all. There was in addition a sum of £6,800,000 last year of what the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer is pleased to call capital expenditure. Nobody knows better than the right hon. Gentleman that there is no such thing as capital expenditure possible in this country.

There is no capital account; it is a way of throwing dust over the expedient devised for saddling succeeding years with the proper expenses of the current year. The system is this. You want to build some barracks, or works at Gibralter—good, bad, or indifferent—you want to make a Pacific Cable, or run a railway in Uganda, and you know perfectly well that the House of Commons will not give you the money; but you bring in a Bill and borrow large sums of money, mainly from the Savings Banks, and you then charge on each year's revenue interest and a Sinking Fund repayment of capital calculated at a certain number of years. And when you have passed the Loan Bill, the country is saddled with the amount until it has been paid off in the manner I have described. That is what the right hon. Gentleman calls "Capital Expenditure." It is expenditure in diminution of loans you have made for certain purposes. Now, therefore, to the £9,700,000 intercepted and paid to local taxation account and the £13,300,000 intercepted and used as appropriations-in-aid must be added this £6,800,000 of so-called capital expenditure, and consequently you have close on £30,000,000 as the total amount of expenditure which does not appear in the accounts of the year. In view of these facts it is correct to say that the expenditure last year was not £185,400,000, but £215,000,000, and, assuming that the same conditions will prevail, and they will not be very different this year, the expenditure will not be £143,900,000, but close upon £174,000,000. It seems to me that this is a very serious matter. The account I have given is a true account of the whole expenditure, and that true account is not to be found in any public statement of the accounts of the country. You cannot find it in the Finance Accounts or the Board of Trade Abstract, or in that admirable Return secured by the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton. I say it is monstrous to go on in this way with this system deceiving the people.

But that is not all. There are the Supplementary Estimates which may add much more even to the £174,000,000 already representing the expenditure of the current year. We do not know what amount these will be; we never do until towards the close of the financial year. Now, this Government has undoubtedly been a sinner beyond all Governments in this respect, so much a sinner that I have wondered how the Tower of Siloam has not fallen upon them. They have every year come to this House for Supplementary Estimates. Every year they have confessed that their Budget Estimates were incorrect, and have asked the House to give them from £2,000,000 to £7,000,000 in addition. I have excluded the Supplementary Estimates for the war—for I admit that when there is war Supplementary Votes cannot be avoided. If there is war you can have no financial control; you throw out your money like water, and need not expect any account of it. But, without the war, the Supplementary Estimates for last year amounted to £9,000,000, and you may have many other millions added to this year's total before the end of the financial year. Let the House remember that Supplementary Estimates are usually resorted to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the purpose of raiding a surplus which he sees accruing towards the end of the year. What the Chancellor of the Exchequer does is this. I am talking, of course, not of my right hon. friend, but of the abstract Chancellor of the Exchequer. The abstract Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he finds himself in possession of £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 beyond what is required for his expenditure, sends round to the Departments and says—"Now is your chance; bring in your Supplementary Estimates, and spend this money; otherwise the awful thing will happen: it will go to the reduction of the National Debt, and that is a thing which no Chancellor of the Exchequer ever contemplates." The result is that the Departments think of all the things which they want—all the things that are necessary, and all the things which they do not want and are not necessary; and they draw up Supplementary Estimates which absorb all the money that ought to go and otherwise would go to the extinction of debt. I do not think myself that that is likely to happen this year, because my belief is that the Estimates for the year are very generous.

There is one other point which I wish to bring before the House. I do earnestly entreat the attention of the House to the present condition of the control of the House itself over the expenditure at large. The control of the House has almost disappeared. The securities for the control of the expenditure and for audit have been gnawed away by successive Ministers in the various Departments, and they are now absolutely illusory; they, in fact, scarcely exist. The Comptroller and Auditor-General seems to regard himself as an instrument and servant of the Treasury rather than the guardian of the public purse. The Committee of Public Accounts itself is placed in such a position that its reports and decisions do not get the attention to which they are entitled. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has studied the reports of that excellent Committee on National Expenditure moved for by the hon. Member for Oldham. If he were to study it, he would see the defects of the present system very clearly. This one thing I want to press upon the right hon. Gentleman and the House: If the

Public Accounts Committee is to be of any utility whatever, it should be no longer treated as it now is. The Report of the Public Accounts Committee is laid on the Table, and no one reads it except perhaps the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean, who reads everything. Very few other Members look at it at all. The only remedy for that is that a day should be fixed for the reception and discussion of the Report. The Public Accounts Committee is one of the most important bodies in this country; and my belief is that when the Chancellor of the Exchequer looks into it, he will share my conviction that the Committee is deprived of much of its usefulness by the absence of an absolutely inevitable opportunity for the discussion of its Report.

There are other matters which also call for special attention. One is the great abuse by Ministers of grants-in-aid. Grants-in-aid are grants expended by persons other than public officers, that is, by the officers of the Treasury and the various other Departments. Grants-in-aid are made to all kinds of people, from a Crown colony to the British Museum. It is true that there are conveniences attached to making grants-in-aid, if they are only kept within proper bounds. But grants-in-aid have now reached such an enormous extent that they certainly require curbing. Would this House believe that these grants, made as a rule without any condition as to the return of any surplus, last year amounted to no less a sum than £12,600,000. That is a monstrous abuse They ought not to be one-tenth of that sum; certainly not more than one-tenth. It is proper to make grants-in-aid to the National Gallery or to scientific bodies when you wish to encourage them to perform certain work, and that the grant should be left out and out in their hands to be expended in one year or more. That is a very defensible system so long as the total of these grants is small. But not when grants-in-aid have grown to this enormous sum, and when they are extended to expenditure in the Crown colonies, they ought to be treated in the same way as all other expenditure. Then again, the form of the Estimates cries aloud for revision. At present we lose all control whatever over the large appropriations-in-aid that I have mentioned. That is not inevitable. It is perfectly possible to so frame the Estimates that the House shall retain its control over appropriations-in-aid. At present there is no control over them except in connection with the Appropriation Act. Why should not the right hon. Gentleman consult the Public Accounts Committee? It has a claim to be consulted. It is the proper body to be consulted as regards the best form of the Estimates. I earnestly trust the right hon. Gentleman will submit to the Public Accounts Committee, or some other body, or, at any rate, will consider himself how the Estimates can be recast in accordance with these suggestions, which correspond with those made years ago by officials of this House. I could make my right hon. friend a suggestion or two myself, if he cares to have them; but the form of the Estimates should be revised in order that the House should gain control over these appropriations-in-aid.

One last word as to the Sinking Fund. It is true, as the hon. Member for Exeter said, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer can, to a large extent, control the credit of this country, that he can maintain it or depress it by the use he makes of the Sinking Fund. Undoubtedly, when the Sinking Fund is maintained at a high and proper level, the credit of this country is bound to go on increasing. The Chancellor of the Exchequer may issue a loan when he has a large Sinking Fund on such favourable terms as will more than compensate him for any trouble he may be put to to maintain the Fund, or any small sacrifice he may make to keep it up to the proper level. All he gives to the Sinking Fund he will get back again in overflowing measure. Take the instance of the Transvaal loan. In my opinion, the conditions under which the Chancellor of the Exchequer issued that loan were absolutely proper. A loan should be issued at par, and what we have to play with is not the price of issue but the interest. The right hon. Gentleman did issue the Transvaal loan at par, but I would point out to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that whereas, according to the terms of the conversion scheme to which we are pledged, we are assumed to be a two and a half per cent. country, as a matter of fact we are practically a two and three-quarter per cent. country; and the Transvaal loan shows that we are even nearer a three per cent. country than a two and three-quarter per cent. country. I say further that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer will persevere in the maintenance of a proper Sinking Fund and allow it to accumulate, he will soon reduce this country from a two and three-quarter or three per cent. country, to a two and a half per cent. country. It all depends upon the Sinking Fund. It is not only your war chest, it is also the great buttress of your credit; and it is on that ground that I attach so great importance to it. Let us see what the right hon. Gentleman has done with regard to the Sinking Fund. I am not going to make any great complaint about his action. For special reasons the right hon. Gentleman just now is entitled to my special gratitude and support; and, therefore, I am not going to say anything that will give him trouble. The Sinking Fund as proposed for the forthcoming year is not adequate to the enormous increase in our liabilities. Let the House remember that our total liabilities are nearly £800,000,000—£798,000,000. In addition to that, we are shortly to be called upon to find another £100,000,000 for the purchase of Irish land, and a sum of £12,000,000 to induce the acceptance of the £100,000,000 Consequently, our liabilities are increasing at such a rate as to demand an increase of the Sinking Fund.

Do not let the right hon. Gentleman tell me what he is going to do next year. I am not going to have that. We deal with our finance year by year, and neither my right hon. friend nor I can say what the necessities of next year may be or who will be Chancellor of the Exchequer. We claim to deal with our finance year by year, and I must say that this year the right hon. Gentleman has not fulfilled all the expectations I formed of him with regard to his action in connection with the Sinking Fund. In 1895–6, the first year this Government was responsible, the funded and unfunded debt and the terminable annuities amounted to £648,000,000, while the total liability of the State was £652,000,000. What provision was made by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer for the following year. He provided £1,400,000 for the New Sinking Fund. Here let me make a distinction. There are two Sinking Funds; but as to the old Sinking Fund I really pay very little attention to it as an element for reducing the Debt, because I never knew a Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he could, who ever allowed a farthing of any overplus of revenue over expenditure to go to that destination. Therefore, I attach no importance to the old Sinking Fund, but I do attach importance to the New Sinking Fund. At this moment the aggregate liability of the State is £798,000,000, as against £652,000,000 in 1895–6, and the right hon. Gentleman only proposes to apply to the New Sinking Fund £1,554,000. That is really not sufficient. I am well aware that there are other provisions for terminable annuities, but I decline to take them into account. They were provided by the right hon. Gentleman's predecessors, and he must pay them off whether he likes it or not. I am dealing only with the region in which the right hon. Gentleman's own free will can act, and that is the region of the New Sinking Fund for this year. If I can show him that he has not provided sufficient for the New Sinking Fund it is no defence for him, and no consolation for me, to say that Mr. Gladstone or someone else years ago provided for these terminable annuities which he must pay. That is not to his merit or demerit. I maintain that the New Sinking Fund is not so much as it should be. But I recognise the right hon. Gentleman's position. I also recognise the value of his declaration that he means to stand for economy, and I am not going to press him as regards the Sinking Fund or anything else just now. The right hon. Gentleman has ranged himself on the side, not of those who are going to levy revenue for purposes other than expenditure, not of those who are going to get vast sums out of the food of the people. He has ranged himself on the side of those who work for economy, and I can assure him that there are many men on this side of the House—staunch Tories—who will stand by him in the cause of economy against whoever may oppose him.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): Under other circumstances I should have felt compelled to give this Budget my strongest opposition, because, apart from the abolition of the corn duty, it seems to me to be objectionable in the extreme. But under existing conditions I shall certainly not oppose the Second Reading of the Bill, for I feel it to be my duty to give my support to the right hon. Gentleman and what was called by the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, the free trade Tory Party. It looks as if some Jonah is to be thrown over by the Government to allay the storm, and I do not wish it should be the right hon. Gentleman, but some other. Apart from its merits the debate has been of considerable value, for it has turned largely on the question of expenditure. I sometimes think that economy is a lost art, but the very powerful speech of the hon. Member for West Bristol the other day, and the speech of the hon. Member for Exeter and the speech to which we have just listened show there is a strong feeling, not confined to one side of the House, to support the Chancellor of the Exchequer in carrying out the policy, stated the other day, of making, a considerable reduction in the national expenditure. I imagine in regard to that he will receive much greater support than he might have anticipated when he first introduced this Budget. The hon. Member opposite has made a great point with regard to the constitution of the Budget and of the necessity of seeing from time to time how we stand; the hon. Member's suggestion that the House should have the full control over national expenditure, and his suggestion with regard to the recommendations of the Committee of Public Accounts deserve very serious consideration. The Public Accounts Committee was originally created by Mr. Gladstone with the object of checking the expenditure of the country and bringing matters to the attention of the House which deserved its consideration. It has ceased to perform that function. The accounts now go to the Committee, which then make certain recommendations to the Departments, and the matter never comes before the House for review at all. I am not one of those who think that the control of expenditure should be taken out of the Departments and placed in the hands of this House, because we should then do away with all departmental responsibility. It has not answered abroad and will not here, but there is no doubt that the question of expenditure is a very serious one for the representatives of this country.

We have been told for the last year or two that the taxation was put on for the purposes of the war, but that is not so. The taxation was put on to meet our increasing expenditure year by year. If the expenditure of the country had not grown in the way it has the ordinary increase of revenue would have been sufficient to pay all the cost of the war, but the expenditure has grown to such an enormous extent that it has swallowed up any surplus there might have been, and we have had to pay the tax of the war as well. Since 1895 the expenditure has increased by no less than £42,000,000 a year, and since the same period the revenue has increased by no less than £22,000,000 a year. I hope, therefore, the right hon. Gentleman who has raised his voice in favour of economy will find he is now able to start afresh and overhaul our expenditure in different directions and see what real economy he can bring forth. We should not, now that the war is ended, hesitate to reduce our debt as quickly as we possibly can, and in that regard I entirely endorse what has fallen from various speakers in deeply regretting that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not seen his way to add a larger amount for the reduction of debt than is in the Budget which he presented. We had some reason to think he would do so, because his predecessor on two occasions stated positively that he intended when possible to increase the Sinking Fund and to start a new Sinking Fund to meet the war expenditure. He evidently did not mean a new Sinking Fund, because the Chancellor of the Exchequer has drawn it all up in one fixed charge for the reduction of debt. The fixed charge for the reduction of debt, even if no account was taken of the expenditure for the war, if it was in proportion to that of 1899, ought not to be £27,000,000 but £29,000,000. It is essential for the trade of this country that our debt should be reduced as speedily as possible. The war has been a great object lesson to us in the way of getting into debt. We have had prophecies from various Chancellors of the Exchequer every time they have reduced the Sinking Fund that within a limited number of years the Debt would be paid off. The right hon. Gentleman gave us his prophecy in that direction but he rather went back from it afterwards. We have now a debt larger than we have had for the last thirty-five years, and I think under the circumstances the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman are very inadequate. There is another question I should like to refer to, and that is the proportion between direct and indirect taxation. In my opinion the right hon. Gentleman has remitted too large an amount of indirect and too large an amount of direct taxation, and I should just like to say that in my opinion the right hon. Gentleman will find it a very difficult matter—I know his estimates of the revenue are not excessive, and that his estimated expenditure is not under the mark—if at the end of the year he finds that he has underestimated the expenditure and overestimated the revenue, and that there is a deficit instead of a surplus, not to reduce the amount now allotted for the reduction of debt. I should have been glad therefore if the right hon. Gentleman had not remitted so much taxation this year, but had allowed a larger amount to have gone to the reduction of the Debt.

MR. RITCHIE: The discussion of to-day has been a very interesting one, and I do not complain of any criticism of the matters referred to in the Bill. There have been a good many subjects discussed, and of course the House will understand that it is hardly possible that I should go in great detail into the points that have been raised. Opportunities will arise in the further stages of the Bill for the discussion of many of the special subjects referred to, when they can be dealt with perhaps better than on this occasion. The hon. Member who began the discussion to-day devoted a large portion of his speech to an exceedingly important question—the question of taxation on coal. His arguments require to be answered, but perhaps he will consider that I might be taking too much of the time of the House if I were to go into the statistical questions and details involved to-day.

MR. JOSEPH WALTON: May I say that I propose to move to add a clause to the Finance Bill on this question? Perhaps that would be a fitting opportunity for the discussion?

MR. RITCHIE: I felt sure that the hon. Member would have some Amendment on the Committee stage which would raise the whole question and enable it to be amply and properly discussed. Many of the points require elucidation and discussion, and I certainly shall not shrink from discussing any one of them on the appropriate occasion which will be afforded to us by the Motion he may put upon the Paper. And so with regard to many other points. The hon. Member for Stepney spoke about Income Tax evasion. Perhaps he was not aware of the fact that I have already undertaken to ask the House of Commons to appoint a Committee to investigate that extremely important subject; and I am glad to think that we shall probably be able to avail ourselves of the services of a very distinguished Member of this House as Chairman of the Committee, and that we shall secure a very thorough examination into what I honestly believe is a practice of evasion which largely tends to diminish the revenue we ought to derive from the income tax. It is very unjust to those who make honest returns, and who pay their income tax honestly, that other people should be allowed in one way or another to avoid their full payment. I hope that no considerable delay will ensue before I am able to put on the Paper of the House the proposed reference, and also the proposed members of the Committee. My hon. friend spoke about the way in which the existing law allowed taxation to be avoided in the issue of foreign bonds, and in the registration of companies. These matters require looking into, and I can assure him that I propose that they should be looked into.

My hon. friend the Member for King's Lynn referred to one or two important matters which he has brought to the attention of the House on more than one occasion, and I think the hon Gentleman who has just sat down also referred to one of the points raised by my hon. friend—namely, the question of local taxation not being included in the statement of national income and expenditure. The House will readily imagine that I have had a good many things to look into since I came into office, and I have not had sufficient time to investigate this very important subject; but so far as I have looked into the question, I think there is a good deal to be said from the point of view taken by my hon. friend and also by the hon. Gentleman opposite. I do not mean to say that I think there is anything seriously wrong—that there is anything in the state of the accounts laid before the House which would make it in the least difficult for any one who desired to get at the total amount to find it for himself. It is all fully stated in one form or another in our accounts, and although it is not done in the form which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton would like, yet it is readily available to anyone who desires to investigate the subject. I myself, along with my right hon. friend who was then the Chancellor of the Exchequer, have had some responsibility in this matter, because it was part of the Local Government Act of 1888, for which I was mainly responsible; and although I thought at the time that it was a very convenient way of dealing with this money to open a separate account for it, and pay moneys due to that account into the account direct, yet I am quite willing to acknowledge that I think it might perhaps be well if an alteration were made in the direction desired by the hon. Gentlemen who have spoken. It would, of course, require legislation; and there is also this difficulty in connection with it, which I may as well state now—namely, that, as the House knows, the local authorities are entitled to a certain proportion of certain taxes which have been raised and which are collected by the officers of the Inland Revenue. I see a difficulty about continuing that proportion if we are to do as my hon. friend desires. It almost looks as if it would require to be made a fixed sum, but I am not at all sure that local authorities would care to consent to a change of that kind. In one way it might give them more revenue, but in another way it would take revenue from them. If the gross revenue from these taxes were to go below its present point, of course it would be an advantage to the local authorities; but if it were to go above that point it would be a disadvantage to them, and they would consider that they were losing a certain portion of the revenue appropriated to them by Act of Parliament. I do not say that is an insuperable difficulty. I myself could suggest one or two ways in which the change might perhaps be effected. I hope the House will be satisfied from the remarks I have made that I think something can be done, and, at any rate, I will undertake to investigate the subject. With regard to appropriations-in-aid, that matter has been investigated before, and the balance of opinion, so far as I can see, appears to have been in favour of the existing state of things.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: That might be so long as the appropriations were small, but not since they have become so enormous.

Mr. RITCHIE: So far as investigation has been made it has been in favour of the present system. When my hon. friend says that the control of the House of Commons is not as adequate as it ought to be, I am afraid I do not agree with him. As far as my experience goes, and I have been in the House a good many years now, I have never found that there is any difficulty at all in the exercise of House of Commons control in connection with these appropriations-in-aid. So far as capital expenditure is concerned, I understand from my hon. friend that the Committee which is now sitting is likely to make some recommendations. I am told their Report is in draft and will soon be presented, and I can assure my hon. friend I will carefully examine both Report and evidence, and I have no doubt that some very valuable recommendations will be made which shall receive my full consideration. References have also been made to Supplementary Estimates. I have only had one year at the Exchequer, but, as my hon. friend can imagine, that has not been altogether a favourable one to his suggestion. I do not think he is quite correct in describing the manner in which the Treasury go round to the public Departments towards the end of the year in order to beseech them to see whether they cannot buy something or other which will necessitate Supplementary Estimates. The expenditure which the hon. Member refers to is really expenditure which would appear in a capital account if we had one. It is incurred, after all, on matters which are really appropriate to a capital account, and therefore it is called capital expenditure. While I say that, my hon. friend must not imagine that I regard the Bills which come in for naval and military expenditure and other purposes with anything like satisfaction. I think we ought to do all we can to get something like finality in matters of that kind, something approaching to finality, and to that end we ought to strive. It is said that the House has very little control; but as a matter of fact the sum required for interest and repayment appears on the Estimates every year, and thus the House does have control over this expenditure. In the first place it has to consent to the Bill, and then year by year it has full cognisance of the matter in consequence of the sum put on the Estimates for the instalments of interest and principal.

But undoubtedly the most important point of this discussion is that of national expenditure. I have had many recommendations to bring my own personal influence to bear so as to secure a reduction, but that is not by any means an easy task. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that all his influence in the Cabinet was in the direction of economy, and I cannot understand any Chancellor of the Exchequer who does not bring all the influence he can to bear on his colleagues and preach to them the doctrine of economy. I have heard it stated—I do not know with what truth—that Mr. Gladstone once said that every Chancellor of the Exchequer when he attended a Cabinet meeting should always have his resignation in his pocket. I do not go quite so far as that; but I do say that any Chancellor of the Exchequer who does not do his utmost to keep economical expenditure and administration to the front is not worth his salt. I shall therefore endeavour to exercise such influence as I can to keep down expenditure. But the House will understand that this can only be done within certain limits. The House of Commons itself is not by any means an economical body, nor do I think the community itself is economical. I do not think expenditure is unpopular; it is very unpopular when we have to collect the taxes, and it is unpopular in the House of Commons when we discuss the Estimates. But it is not unpopular in the House on other occasions when we have to discuss abstract Resolutions pressing on the Government to increase expenditure here and there. I agree that the normal expenditure has increased by leaps and bounds and that a large portion of the additional taxation has been levied, not for war expenditure, but for ordinary normal expenditure. The normal growth of the revenue has not been anything like sufficient to meet the great growth in the normal expenditure of the country. I do not shut my eyes to the fact and I agree that it is very regrettable; but when we come to examine the heads under which this expenditure has been incurred it is much more difficult to say how the increase should be avoided. The hon. Member for Dundee asked as to the increase in the Navy and what was our naval standard. The expenditure of other countries has greatly increased; and, though I hope we shall always be on terms of close friendship with them, I must point to the growth of the navies of Germany and the United States. We cannot ignore these facts, for the existence of this country depends on its Navy. We cannot afford to fall below that standard which is necessary to secure our power at sea, not only on account of the safety of the Empire, but for the food of the people. I only wish that foreign countries would enter into a sort of league with us to keep down the enormous expenditure which is being incurred in all these naval preparations. I can assure the House that nothing would give us greater satisfaction than to reduce our naval expenditure if we could do so in company with other countries. But until that can be done I am afraid we cannot look for any decrease in the expenditure of the present time. The normal expenditure of the Army has also been greatly increased; but now when the war is over we hope that we may be able somewhat to reduce the money spent on the Army. But here, again, that cannot be done by a stroke of the pen. Any reduction in the Army must be a reduction which must be more or less gradual.

Something has been said as to the contribution made towards our expenditure by the colonies. I am glad that something at any rate is being contributed. I agree, however, that, having regard to the fact that a considerable proportion of our expenditure is incurred in order to protect our colonies, we ought to have larger contributions from them than we have. I regret very much indeed that Canada does not contribute anything at all to the defence of the Empire, and I doubt whether any part of it derives more benefit than Canada from the expenditure we have to incur in connection with our Army and Navy. I think that the amount of the South African contribution which has been promised is by no means inadequate, having regard to the circumstances of South Africa. The last thing we ought to attempt to do is to cripple South Africa by trying to obtain larger sums than it can possibly contribute. I am in hope, however, that as things settle down more we may get something additional, but to attempt to extract more than the country can afford would be disadvantageous to us in the long run. It is to the development of South Africa we must look for the ultimate benefit.

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield): Is not the loan of £30,000,000 a final settlement?

MR. RITCHIE: Yes, as far as the Transvaal is concerned; but it is possible we may get something more from other quarters. It has been suggested that I did not exercise sufficient care in the preparation of these Estimates, and that I have overestimated the amount of revenue that we are likely to obtain. As to that, I can only say that I acted on the advice of those gentlemen whose forecasts almost invariably have proved correct. They may have been too sanguine, but it would not have been right for me to say that they must reduce their Estimates after they had so carefully prepared them. I did not attempt to increase them or to reduce them; but I impressed on my advisers the desirability of making accurate estimates as far as they could. With regard to the National Debt, I entirely agree with everything said, especially by my hon. friends the Members for Exeter and Islington, both of whom have large experience in financial matters, and whose opinions are entitled to very great weight. I have had some experience in matters of that kind; and I entirely concur in the view that we ought to be extremely careful, for the sake of the financial position of the country, to do all that we can to keep up an efficient Sinking Fund. I do not want to go into the details of that Sinking Fund now; the speeches made today have only been a repetition of remarks which have been made before, and to which I have previously had an opportunity of replying. I shall no doubt have another opportunity of replying to them, and I hope that at the proper time I shall be able to prove conclusively that we have done well in regard to this matter; and that while, as we stand to-day, the position is not at all unsatisfactory, in a year or two we shall have a Sinking Fund proportionately very much larger than ever before. When it is stated that we have not appropriated as much for the payment of debt as Sir Stafford Northcote did, I would remind the House that the present proportion of Sinking Fund to debt is infinitely greater than it was in the time of Sir Stafford Northcote. At that time the proportion was ·53 per cent. It is now ·85 per cent. of the total debt, and in four or five years it will be 1·25 per cent. Thus it will be seen that we have not done badly in that matter as compared with the time to which hon. Members have referred. As to the question of direct and indirect taxation, I will, as the time is somewhat short, reserve my remarks until we get into Committee. I do not understand that there is any desire to oppose the Second Reading of the Bill. It is, on the whole and in its main principles, a Budget which is satisfactory, I think, to the House; and I trust that the House may be saved a division, and that we shall vote the Budget Bill unanimously.

*SIR HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I only want to detain the House with two or three observations in reply to what has fallen from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I think I may say that so far as this side of the House is concerned we are satisfied with the tone of the right hon. Gentleman's remarks on the very grave questions arising on this Budget. The question of national expenditure is, perhaps, the gravest that is raised by this Budget. Referring to Mr. Gladstone in that connection, the right hon. Gentleman had said that Mr. Gladstone's dictum was that every Chancellor of the Exchequer should have his resignation in his pocket. I do not think that Mr. Gladstone meant that the resignation was always to be taken out of his pocket, but only that it was to be a weapon of which the Cabinet was always aware, and which might be called into play at any time. But there was one peculiarity of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinets that whenever the Chancellor of the Exchequer showed himself on the side of economy, and proposed in any way a reduction of expenditure, he had no more powerful supporter in the Cabinet than Mr. Gladstone himself. Finding fault as I do with a great deal of the expenditure that we have to submit to at the present time, I insist quite as strongly as does the right hon. Gentleman on the supreme necessity of keeping up our naval expenditure to the proper point in order to secure the supremacy of this country, whatever circumstances may arise. The duty of the House of Commons is to see that it gets money's worth for its money, and the duty of the responsible advisers of the Crown is to state what, in their judgment, is necessary for the proper maintenance of the Navy. On the Army I will only say that I hope efforts will be made to reduce an expenditure, which there is a general opinion has reached a standard beyond what the necessities of the country require. It is believed that the money voted for the Army is neither judiciously nor economically expended.

With regard to the question of the local taxation account—a matter in which I have taken much interest during the last few years—I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer will find that the difficulties which he advanced are entirely on paper, and have no reality whatever. There is no necessity for any new legislation whatever. All that we want is that the money that goes into the Exchequer shall be stated as in one sum. The statements of our revenue are the most misleading that can be imagined. The Chancellor of the Exchequer comes down to the House and says that the revenue of the year has been £151,000,000. But the revenue has really been £161,000,000. The right hon. Gentleman says that the death duties amounted to £14,000,000 last year. No, Sir, they amounted to £19,000,000, of which £5,000,000 was paid to the local taxation fund. I know the difficulties which the right hon. Gentleman had in forming that fund, which was necessary for his great Act; but those difficulties have now disappeared; and we say that these various taxes, like whiskey money, beer money, and estate duty, should go into their proper place in the Exchequer, as forming part of the national income. On the other side of the account the portions appropriated should be stated as paid into the local taxation account, and then the country would not be deceived. The hon. Member for King's Lynn has raised the question of the great growth of national expenditure; but, in consequence of the way in which we prepare our accounts, we include in income and expenditure a great deal that is neither one nor the other. We say that taxation has increased by so many millions between 1891 and the present time, and we include in that the expenditure which we are obliged to make on our Post Office. Ten years ago the Post Office produced an income of £12,000,000, and required an expenditure of £9,000,000. Now the income of the Post Office is about £18,000,000, and the expenditure on it is £13,250,000. But that is not an increase of public expenditure; it is simply a natural extension of business. The question is—What is the net amount that goes into the Exchequer? You are carrying on a great business in the Post Office, and people are not taxed for it, but the balance of revenue is paid into the Exchequer.

MR. RITCHIE: Why may not the same be said about the Customs?

* SIR HENRY FOWLER: No, that is not the same thing. That is a case of direct taxation, whereas there is no tax associated with the Post Office. Our accounts do not show what is the real revenue and real expenditure of the

National Exchequer. As to the appropriation account, which has been criticised, the action of the Treasury has been approved by the experience of those who have had to administer the Treasury, and there would be much dissatisfaction with any interference. Every item is under the control of the House of Commons. With regard to the National Debt, I do not think it is open to the gloomy criticisms which have been passed upon it. I demur altogether to the statement that the price of Consols is an indication of the state of the country's credit. The price of Consols depends upon the state of the money market. I remember that in the period of 1866 a leading banker said to a friend of mine, "If you were to bring all the title deeds of your country to-day to Lombard Street you would not get £5,000 on them." That day a complaint was made in this House that the Bank of England had refused to make any advance on Consols, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the day at once took care to set that right. But that was not an indication of a fall of the credit of this country as a country; it was a result of the commercial disruption of the money market. At the present moment Consols have gone down to 92. Any gentleman who thinks that is an indication of a fall of the credit of this country should remember that Consols at a shade under 84 would really be the equivalent of the par price of the Transvaal Loan at 3 per cent. Therefore, Consols still hold their position as the premier security, and, in my opinion, their rise and fall depend on the state of the money market. But there have been times when the rise and fall depended on the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer will not repeat what I think was the mistake of his predecessor when he bought Consols at 110 and 112 and forced up the price of Consols against himself, he being the only real buyer in the market. A great deal of the difficulty which has arisen was created by an exaggerated price caused by the Chancellor of the Exchequer's expending such large sums of money in Consols on behalf of the savings banks and the Sinking Fund I do not know whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer intends to adopt the Report of the Committee on the Investments of Savings Banks; but I think he will have very seriously to consider it, because if we are to make annual investments of £10,000,000, in a few years it will have a very serious effect. So far as this side of the House is concerned, I think there will be no opposition to the Second Reading of this Bill, but we to reserve ourselves the fullest right of discussing its various points on the clauses of the Bill when they can be dealt with on their merits.

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): The right hon. Gentleman has not replied to my Question as to the drawback on flour.

MR. RITCHIE: Oh, I beg the hon. Member's pardon, I overlooked that. I understand the Question of the hon. Member was why the rebate should be limited to sums of £25 and over. Let me say at once I am not disposed to make any alteration in the limit of the rebate. The reason why I have allowed any rebate at all — a most exceptional course to take — is that I desire to do nothing which will interrupt the flow of corn into the country. There is plenty of time in which small owners could so arrange their stock as to get rid of it before the duty comes off. That was not the case with merchants who had imported large cargoes, and if their business had been checked wheat might have risen to a high price. Therefore, I gave these special facilities so that the trade might go on without interruption. They will not apply to small holders who have had plenty of time between the announcement of the Budget and the 30th of June to get rid of their stock.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

OUTDOOR RELIEF (PENSIONERS) BILL.

[THIRD READING].

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) rose to oppose the Bill. He said that when the Friendly Societies Bill was passed through the House practically unanimously, the House admitted the principle that the incomes derived from contributions to thrifty and other societies should not be considered by boards of guardians when they came to administer outdoor relief. But they could not stop at the case of the friendly societies; why should not pensioners from the Army and Navy be treated on the same footing. This Bill was therefore a necessary corollary to the other. But since the latter was passed a change had come over the scene. The Friendly Societies Bill had been rejected by the House of Lords, and one reason for passing this Bill had disappeared. He held that if the Government intended to give effect to legislation of this kind it should deal with it by means of a general Bill. This Bill carried with it its own condemnation. The pension of a soldier or a sailor ought to be sufficient to secure him a decent existence as a pensioner. Let them compare the military and naval with the police pensions.

And, it being half-past Five of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Tuesday next.

EDUCATION (BORROWING) BILL.

As amended, considered; read the third time, and passed.

RAILWAYS (ELECTRICAL POWER) EXPENSES.

Resolution reported—

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of the remuneration of any persons appointed by the Board of Trade for the purposes of any Act of the present session to facilitate the introduction and use of electric power on railways, and any other expenses incurred by the

Board of Trade in carrying such Act into effect."

Resolution agreed to.

NEW BILL.

LIGHT LOCOMOTIVES (REGISTRATION).

Bill to provide for the Registration of motor vehicles and to amend the Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Scott-Montagu, Mr. Arthur Stanley, Mr. Bull, Mr. Murray, Mr. Norman, Mr. Harmsworth, and Mr. T. P. O'Connor.

LIGHT LOCOMOTIVES (REGISTRATION) BILL.

"To provide for the Registration of motor vehicles and to amend the Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 23rd June, and to be printed. [Bill 243.]

IRISH LAND [ADVANCES, ETC.].

Committee to consider of authorising the creation of Capital Stock for raising money for the purposes of any Act of the present Session to amend the Law relating to the occupation and ownership of land in Ireland, of authorising the payment out of the Consolidated Fund and out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of Dividends, Sinking Fund, Salaries, Superannuation Allowances, and certain other expenses payable under such Act (King's Recommendation signified), upon Monday next.—(*Mr. Wyndham.*)

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

Municipal Trading: That they have appointed a Committee consisting of seven Lords to join with a Committee of the Commons, pursuant to Message of this House, "to consider and report as to the principles which should govern powers given by Bills and Provisional Orders to municipal and other local authorities for industrial enterprise within or without the area of their jurisdiction," and propose that the said Joint Committee do meet in Committee Room B, on Monday next, at Three o'clock.

Lords' Message considered.

Ordered: That the Committee of this House do meet the Lords' Committee as proposed by their Lordships.

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

Port of London Bill: That they have appointed a Committee consisting of five Lords to join with a Committee of the Commons, pursuant to Message of this House, for the consideration of the Port of London Bill, and propose that the said Joint Committee do meet in Committee Room A, on Thursday next, at half-past Two o'clock.

Lords' Message considered.

Ordered: That the Committee of this House do meet the Lords' Committee as proposed by their Lordships.

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

Adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Six o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 15*th June*, 1903.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that His Majesty had (by Commission) appointed the Earl Waldegrave Speaker of the House in the absence of the Lord Chancellor or Lord Keeper, the Earl of Morley, the Earl of Cork and Orrery, the Earl de Montalt, and the Earl of Halsbury; and the Lord Ribblesdale Speaker of the House in the absence of the Lord Chancellor or Lord Keeper, the Earl of Morley, the Earl of Cork and Orrery, the Earl de Montalt, the Earl of Halsbury, and the Earl Waldegrave: The said Commissions were read.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with: Naval Works Provisional Order; Local Government Provisional Orders (Gas); Middlesbrough Corporation; Lanarkshire and Dumbartonshire Railway; South Yorkshire Joint Railways; Wolverhampton and Cannock Chase Railway (Extension of Time); Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway (Various Powers); Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland; Great Western Railway; Woolwich Borough Council; Great Southern and Western Railway; Mullingar, Kells, and Drogheda Railway; Plymouth Corporation; Hainault Forest; London County Council (Money); Neath, Pontardawe, and Brynaman Railway; North-Eastern Railway; Wood Green Urban District Council.

And the Certificates that no further Standing Orders are applicable to the following Bills: Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 6); Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 8); Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 11).

And also the Certificates that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have not been complied with: London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway; Stroud and District Tramways; Romford and District Tramways; Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Railway; Beckenham Urban District Council.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Manchester Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Supplemental Report from His Majesty's Attorney-General, received, and ordered to lie on the Table.

London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway Bill: A petition of Mr. William Howard Gray, of 63, Queen Victoria Street, London, solicitor, praying for leave to present a petition of Messrs. Frederick Boyd Brown and Charles Wells, praying to be heard by counsel against the Bill, although the time limited by Standing Order No. 93 for presenting such petition has expired; read, and ordered to lie on the Table; and Standing Order No. 93 to be considered to-morrow in order to its being dispensed with in respect of the said petition.

Gas Light and Coke Company Bill; Great Eastern Railway Bill; Bournemouth Gas and Water Bill [H.L.]. Committee to meet on Thursday next.

Manchester Corporation Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Select Committee, that the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, no parties having appeared in opposition thereto; read, and ordered to lie on the Table: The orders made on 23rd March and 25th May last discharged, and Bill committed.

Market Drayton Gas Bill: Read 3ª, and passed.

Chatham and District Light Railways Bill [H.L]: Read 3ª; Amendments made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

Dover Corporation Bill; Merthyr Tydfil Urban District Council Bill;

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

Wigan Corporation Tramways Bill. Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; and referred to the Examiners.

Metropolitan District Railway (Various Powers) Bill; London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway Bill; Beckenham Urban District Council Bill; Stroud and District Tramways Bill; Romford and District Tramways Bill; Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Railway Bill. Examiner's Certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Tuesday the 23rd instant.

Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]; Gas and Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.]; Charing Cross, Euston, and Hampstead Railway Bill; City and South London Railway Bill; Great Northern Railway Bill; Great Central Railway Bill; London County Council (General Powers) Bill; Walker and Wallsend Union Gas Bill; New Hunstanton Improvement Bill; Lancashire and Yorkshire and London and North-Western Railways (Steam Vessels) Bill. Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; (viz.)—

D. Wellington,
E. Malmesbury,
E. Belmore (chairman),
E. Powis
L. Manners;

agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly: The Committee to meet on Tuesday the 23rd instant, at eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills.

Manchester Southern Tramways (Lancashire) Bill [H.L.]; Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Wellington (Salop) Gas Bill [H.L.]; Commons' Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill. To be read 2ª to-morrow. —(*The Lord Wolverton.*)

Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]; Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]; Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.]. House to be in Committee to-morrow.

Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills. Ordered, That Standing Orders Nos. 72 and 82 be suspended for the remainder of the session.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 2) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill. Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed.

PETITIONS.

LAND REGISTERS (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.].

Petition against: of Messrs. Millar and Bryce; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

SHOPS (EARLY CLOSING) BILL [H.L.].

Petition in favour of: of the National Chamber of Trade; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

LOCAL TAXATION ACCOUNT (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1898.

Return showing the postal payments into and out of the Local Taxation (Scotland) Account for the financial year 1902–1903.

COLONIES (ANNUAL).

No. 387. Gibraltar; Report for 1902.

AUSTRALIAN MAIL SERVICE.

Despatch to the Governor-General of Australia relating to the exclusive employment of white labour.

EXPLOSIVES (EXPLOSIONS OF GUNPOWDER AT SEDGEWICK, NEAR KENDAL).

Report to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Home Department by Captain H. B. Lloyd, His Majesty's Inspector of Explosives, on the circumstances attending explosions of gunpowder which occurred in the glazing and corning houses of the factory of the Sedgewick Gunpowder Company, Limited, at Sedgewick, near Kendal, Westmoreland, on the 30th of March, 1903.

ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND.

Annual Report for the year 1902.

DUBLIN HOSPITALS.

Forty-fifth Report of the Board of Superintendence; with appendices, for the year 1902–1903.

NAVY (BERTHING ACCOMMODATION).

Report of the Committee appointed by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to consider the question of the berthing accommodation for His Majesty's ships in the dockyards and other waters, and also the moorings and material required.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

DISEASES OF ANIMALS ACT, 1894 AND 1896.

Fourteen orders relating to the landing of foreign animals in Great Britain. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

THE FISCAL POLICY OF THE COUNTRY.

VISCOUNT GOSCHEN, in rising to call attention "to recent declarations of Members of His Majesty's Government on the subject of preferential tariffs, and to move for Papers," said: My Lords, I will offer no apology to your Lordships' House for introducing the question of which I have given notice. The House of Lords is not supposed to have much power with reference to financial subjects; but it strikes me that, as an Estate of the Realm, all that concerns, and vitally concerns, the commerce and trade and revenue of the country is of deep interest to your Lordships' House and is entitled to discussion at your hands. But, my Lords, I would offer an apology in this sense; the subject is so vast and goes so deeply into the roots of our prosperity and future financial soundness, that I feel myself oppressed by the vast materials which it may be necessary to traverse. I know it is impossible in a single speech to deal with the great question, the great plan, which has been placed before us. Therefore, your Lordships will be indulgent, I am sure, if upon some parts I only touch the fringe, and endeavour merely to indicate the light in which the features of the plan strike me. I associate myself to the full with all those friends and opponents of the right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary who have seen that on his return from South Africa he had a real conviction of the great issues which he has placed before the country, and that, fresh from his Imperial mission in South Africa, which he performed with such distinguished and memorable success, it was natural for him, if he had conceived a plan by which that Empire for which he had worked so hard might be consolidated and expanded, to feel it was right that he should place it before the country.

I do not propose to entertain your Lordships with any discussion, criticism, or comments upon Ministerial perplexities or Party divisions. All I would say in reference to those matters, at present, is that I would wish the noble Duke who leads us in this House to pronounce himself with as much frankness, with as little reticence, as has characterised some of his colleagues in the Ministry. I think we are entitled to such frankness at his hands. One further request I would make to the noble Duke; and that is that it should be made distinct and clear by him, to whom we look up with such respect, that those who differ upon one side or the other of the Party shall be as free to discuss and to urge their views as the other; that there shall be absolute fair play, and that those should not be considered as mutineers, or as disloyal, who cannot take the view which possibly—though I am not certain of it—the majority of the Ministry may entertain I can assure the noble Duke that there is no disloyalty whatever. I hear the word "mutineer" is being used. But that word does not apply to either section of the Party. They are equally free to discuss and urge upon the country the views which they take.

I would wish, in one word, to explain the spirit in which I am anxious to approach the subject myself and to examine this great project. There is a large floating opinion in the country which has not made up its mind one way or the other. A new generation has sprung up since the days of Cobden and Bright, who, I think I may say, are not acquainted with the old arguments of free trade. There are a large number of men who wish to be enlightened, not with reference to the formulas of the past, but with reference to the application of new economic doctrines to the phenomena of present and existing facts. If I may use the expression, there are a great many agnostics in economics. I wish myself, as a free trader, to look at this matter in such a way as may appeal to those on whom a mere reference to the creeds of the past would not make a sufficient impression. So I will make no reference whatever to what I may call the doctrines and creed of free trade; I will make no reference to Cobden or Bright; I will not speak of the immense prosperity which free trade has given us for the last fifty years, because I find that those are arguments which do not appeal to the very mass of opinion that I should like to see influenced—namely, those who are open to conviction by facts, but are not open to conviction by the repetition of the old formulas. But there must be reciprocity in this matter; and if the free traders—those who are against the plan which has been launched —do not appeal to the old doctrines or to their authorities— their infallible Popes—there must be on the other side no claim of infallibility for the modern doctrines. If the steady light of the well-known beacons by which we have steered, and steered successfully, during the past are to be ignored, at all events let us not be blinded by the dazzling brilliancy of the comet which has flashed across the fiscal sky.

I will make but the briefest possible reference to the unhappy and mysterious subject of the corn duty. I advocated that tax. I held, and I hold now, that it would make an infinitesimal difference, if any, in the price of the food of the people. I think it increased the revenue of the country. It had, in happy and undisturbed obscurity, under Conservative and Liberal statesmen, yielded many millions; and Mr. Gladstone himself raked in millions which that tax gave, with innocent unconsiousness that it was a financial sin. I do not regret the repeal of the corn tax from the point of view which has been put forward by Sir Michael Hicks Beach and others in the House of Commons. It was said that, as it stood, it was a constant temptation to the introduction of preferential tariffs. It was regarded as a stepping-stone to preferential tariffs. And whatever we may think of the new plan, at all events it is better that there should be a clear field, and that we should not have this policy brought before us as a clause in the Budget Bill imposing a shilling duty; but that it should be brought forward in such a distinct manner that the nation may be able to pronounce whether it is prepared to enter upon the fiscal revolution which is embodied in the plan now before the country. I maintain that there is a plan. I see that plan before my own eyes in sharp outline, and I may almost say in colossal proportions; and it is essential that we should distinguish clearly between the various matters which are included in that plan, some of which are interdependent and some of which stand alone. What is embodied in the plan is preferential tariffs to the colonies, with an imposition on the food of this country; preferential tariffs for the colonies, with the grand idea of increasing their prosperity, and, by bringing new corn-growing districts into cultivation and by making the colonies better customers of ours, to do for the colonies so much, in order that they may take more of our goods, resting upon the taxation of food.

I think I have fairly stated the great dream which we would all wish to see realised—closer union with the colonies and the expansion of their prosperity by the extension of their corn-growing districts. That is the first object. Then there comes the second. Revenue is raised by the taxation of imports on food, and that revenue, in the plan as I may call it, is to be applied to old-age pensions. The third object is to secure the power of retaliating on hostile movements on the part of trusts or of trades fed by bounties or by such barriers of high tariffs as would tend to crush the industries of this country. These are the three avowed objects of the plan. But associating themselves with the champions of these three objects there are two other bodies to whom the dazzling prospect appeals. One is the agricultural interest, which hopes that by a tax on corn an impetus may be given to that distressed industry. And another is made up of those who are concerned about the physique of the people, and who believe that by the taxation of corn the labourers may go back to the land, and thus we may receive a fine addition to the strongest and most physically fit portion of our population. These are the objects; and we have to examine them fairly to see what are the means by which these objects, so excellent in themselves, can be accomplished. But, my Lords, I would have you note that the key of the whole plan is that the boon I have mentioned rests upon a taxation of food. What has got to be settled is, in the first instance, how the taxation on food will act upon our population, and whether that condition is not too great a price to pay even for the great boon and benefits offered us by the plan. It is not only a question of taxation of corn and of the grain which is consumed in the fattening of the cattle, but of the taxation of meat—of mutton and of beef. Depend upon it, the humble bacon will follow in this train. All this food will have to be taxed. At what rate will the tariff stand? Will it be 1s. or 2s.? I think, as you look for the objects which are hoped for, you will see that the shilling duty will do extremely little for the plan; 1s. would not be enough to fertilise and to extend the wheat-growing area of Canada; 1s. would not be enough to protect agriculture; 1s. would not be enough to bring the labourer back to the land; and I would point this out to those who believe that in this scheme everything is to tend to the improvement of the physique of the people that it is an odd way of beginning, to tax their food, especially as you must operate, if effect is to be given to this object, by a far larger tax than that. The agricultural interest, I think, hope for 5s.; they do not come out into the open, but that is their hope. And I think the promoters of this scheme ought to face the question boldly and let us know as soon as may be, what rate of taxation on food will be necessary to carry out their plan. My Lords, I now approach the question of the colonial tariff. I may say that I have not a bad record in respect to the question of the colonies. Long before the present enthusiasm, which I rejoice to acknowledge, I was always one of those in the Liberal Party in the old days who clung to the possession of the colonies. I always rejected the idea that we should be better without the colonies, and I have always taken a deep interest in them, and as much as anyone have desired to see consolidation with the colonies, and the ties between us and them drawn as closely as they can safely be drawn. My Lords, the proposal is that the colonies should decrease their tariff in favour of our goods and that we, on the other hand, should tax certain imports, thus establishing a mutual advantage. Now, I hope the colonies will see that what they ask of us is infinitely more than they are prepared to grant to us. What they grant to us will touch certain trades—certain special trades where the British manufacturer competes with the colonial manufacturer. But what they ask of us touches the whole of the population. There is surely there a very great difference.

It is sometimes asked, What do we do for the colonies? At all events, we admit everything which they produce free, while they maintain a tariff against us. In some colonies there is hope of a reduction of their tariff in our favour; but, on the other hand, I also note that there are some who think that the object will be gained by keeping the tariff as against us, but increasing the tariff against the foreigner. I am bound to say that I think that will be a very poor boon to give in exchange to us who are asked to tax the food of the people. Mr. Seddon is rather impetuous. He has already held language to the effect that if we do not grant what is now asked—that is, a preference to their exports—they would see whether it is not necessary to make arrangements with foreign countries. That is not the way to tackle the public opinion of this country. The Canadian Ministers are beginning to consider whether they would not have to go back upon what they have given us. That is not very encouraging. What the colonies must see is this, that they are asking a very large thing. It is not merely a question of a trifling rebate of duty; it is a question that eats into the very vitals of the country. There is also the difficulty, as regards granting a preferential tariff, as to what other countries might do by way of reprisal, and what part the United States might take. I do not propose to examine into this elaborately, but it is a matter which requires most careful examination. We may see our way to a conclusion that there are no dangers which for a great object—and the object is great—we ought not to be prepared to face. But, at any rate, let us note that there are these difficulties, and let them be examined. The whole question of commercial treaties and our relations with foreign countries must be carefully examined, and must form portion of that inquiry which the Government deem it to be desirable to make.

Well, my Lords, I have spoken of the position in the colonies. I would add this further remark, which applies both to the colonies and to ourselves. It is a question how far it is wise to tie our hands, and to tie their hands in a manner which will affect both their treasuries and our treasury in ways that at present one cannot foresee. I will put this test. We make a commercial treaty with our daughters; Mr. Chamberlain asked why should we not make them with our daughters as well as with others. But there is this one risk about the particular arrangement now asked for, and that is it contemplates our putting a tax on food. Suppose we had made a bargain with our colonies, and suppose that before long dear bread should ensue, not from this protective duty only, but from other causes, such as short crops and other defects, may there not be a considerable popular feeling calling for the repeal of that tax? But however much that repeal may be asked for, however great the pressure put upon us, we are tied hand and foot, we have agreed with the colonies; and we should have to go to the colonies and ask them, perhaps after vested interests had grown up in consequence of the privilege we had granted, to tear up the arrangements which we had made, in order that we might free the people and admit all the imports of grain and food for which the country was so clamorously calling.

I think it is admitted by the authors of the plan that the effect of a taxation on food would mean an increase in the cost of food, although there may be great differences of opinion as to the question of degree. But it is said there will be at the same time a great increase in wages. Well, now, let that be proved. That is the first question to which all those who are engaged in this controversy ought to turn their attention. Will dearer food mean higher wages? Let no reference be made to text-books by some economist to show that high wages will follow dearer food. I want to examine the facts; I want to know by what economical process, and not by any spinning of a figment of the brain, by what actual process an increase of wages is to follow an increase i the price of food. It is said that in Germany dear food has been followed by high wages, and that in the United States high wages have followed upon the strong establishment of protection. No argument can be drawn from the example of America to show that what has happened in America would happen here. I want to know the process by which wages are going to be raised. And, another important question, I want to know whose wages are to be raised. Are all the wages in the country to be raised? Is a wave of prosperity to flow from protection? But they say, "We are not asking for protection, but only for retaliation in certain cases." I want to know how the rise in wages is to come about. Assuming, as I will not grant, that through a certain limited amount of fair trade or protection the wages in the manufacturing districts in the trades which are protected should be raised, what certainty or likelihood is there that the rise in wages would extend throughout the country? It may be said that it would extend to general prosperity; but do not let us get to generalities. Let us rather analyse it and look at the different classes affected. Take first the case of the vast body of men who are employed by the Government, by municipalities, and by public bodies. Are we to pay the dockyard hands higher wages? If so, the difference in the charge will have to come out of the taxation of food which has been pledged for old-age pensions. Then there is the Post Office. Are the wages of all Post Office employees, of all the railway men, to be raised? Who will take the responsibility of saying, "Let us put a tax on food and I will guarantee to you all that your wages shall be raised?" I say that is a tremendous responsibility, and one which I for one would be most reluctant to undertake.

What would become of the industries remaining unprotected? They would all have to pay an increase in the price of food without any compensating advantages, so far as I can see, such as the protected industries might gain. Then there is a class which generally inspires deep sympathy. I mean the lower middle class, the class of men who are as poor as or poorer than many of the working classes, and whose wages are kept down by competition. Is it seriously contended that their wages will be raised in consequence of a protective tariff being applied to certain industries in the country? I do not think that can be expected. There was a time when there was some hope for a free breakfast table; but under the present plan not only would there be no free breakfast table, but no free dinner table, no free tea table, and no free supper table. Every meal would have to be taxed, and those vast classes would gain nothing by the imposition of a tax on food followed by higher wages. If the wave of prosperity is to come at all, it would be years before it would reach this submerged class who are hovering on the brink of poverty, the class to whom a few shillings make a considerable difference in their annual expenditure. But another boon is promised which is to be paid out of the tax on food. The money is to go to old-age pensions. To that I would make the obvious objection that, if the hopes of the authors of this plan are to be fulfilled and the colonial wheat-growing area is to be immensely increased, the taxes will diminish every year, and the amount which is being set aside to pay for old-age pensions will be a diminishing quantity On the other hand, the liability for pensions once undertaken can never be stopped, and the country may be landed in a position which I know the Government do not desire, and which Mr. Chamberlain himself has repudiated, that without this taxation on food the country would still be saddled with old-age pensions. The liability is there. How is the money to be found? Every class who derived no benefit from the taxes on food would have to pay for old-age pensions, which at the time of their imposition would be considered as covered by the taxation on food. My lords, I call that a gamble. It is a gamble with the food of the people; and I trust that the noble Duke will tell us that in that gamble he will not take a hand.

I pass now to the third departure in this great controversy—namely, the question of what may really be called protection. I will not call it so, because it is denied by the authors of the scheme that there is any desire to bring about protection. I will call it "retaliatory duties." Well, my Lords, that branch of the subject is of special interest for the Prime Minister. Mr. Chamberlain seems to aim at the consolidation of the Empire, while Mr. Balfour's chief anxiety is the decline of exports and the difficulty of meeting trusts and that class of subjects which comes under the general head of retaliation. The Prime Minister is specially concerned in the condition of the people of this country. His object in having an inquiry is in order to see whether steps ought not to be taken to remedy or to meet the dangers which he foresees. Many people seem to see signs of incipient decay, and in the main they justify that view by the decline in our exports. I am not sure that there are symptoms of decay of so serious a nature as are pointed out. Let us look at several tests. My noble friend Lord Rosebery has pointed to the increased returns of Income Tax. Well, these are very satisfactory, and more especially are they satisfactory in that, although the tax is to-day levied on a narrower area, every penny of the tax to-day produces 10 per cent. more than it did ten years ago. It may be said that the Income Tax returns are no real criterion, that they only represent the incomes of certain classes. Let me point to another symptom, a very satisfactory symptom—namely, the deposits in savings banks. I have the figures extending over fifteen years. The deposits in savings banks, the Post Office Savings Bank and the Trustee Savings Banks, were in 1887 £101,000,000. In 1901 they were £187,000,000. Now these savings come from the pockets of the lower middle classes and the poorer classes, and do not represent in any way the savings of the rich. Then pauperism has declined in the last fifteen years 9 per cent., while the population has increased 18 per cent. I give you these figures as a counterblast against the statement that there are symptoms of decay.

We must make this distinction. In deducting coal from our exports as being capital we must not deduct the whole, but we must only deduct so much as represents the coal itself; for when foreign countries pay us for our coal they pay also for the wages of the men. It is said that our exports are declining. I was amused to find precisely the same arguments carried on to-day as were carried on in 1881. At that time the fair-traders and retaliators and all the various denominations who belonged to the class who predicted ruin to the country, said that we were eating up our capital, and that that had gone on for the last ten years. Well, if that was so, it has been going on now for thirty years. Nevertheless, even if it has, we do not suffer in our income, in the wages of the people, in the population, or in any other respect that I can see, except in a certain, not declining, but slackening of the increase of our exports. It is that slackening of the exports which has mainly attracted the attention of those who fear for our industries and our commerce. It is that, I think, which attracted the attention of the Prime Minister. But before we go to what that decline is to be attributed to, and whether or not it is to be attributed to the hostile barriers abroad, we have got to ask ourselves the question whether our exports have only diminished to the countries where there are high tariffs, or whether they have also diminished to those countries where there is fair trade all round, such, for instance, as China and Japan, and where we compete on equal terms with all the other nations. If it could be proved that the slackening of our exports was due simply to those countries that have raised high tariffs against us, some step in the proof which the fair traders desire would have been given. But if we find that the slackening of increase is in those countries where fair trade prevails, if Germany or France are beating us in China, then I say we must look to other causes besides protection for the further advance which Germany and the United States are making as compared with ourselves.

It was only about a year ago that the great question of the necessity of more technical education was agitated, when it was believed and asserted that it was through our less developed technical education that we were suffering in the markets of the world; and it would be a sad thing if, through any hasty judgment, through any hasty generalisations, you were now to go on a wrong tack, and to attribute to protective tariffs that falling off which might be due to a want of energy or a want of technical education, or other causes apart from free trade. This is of the essence of the question. I would point out that the Germans have got several advantages over us which cannot be reduced to paper. They are more economical in their methods, their expenditure on their staff is less, they are content with smaller profits; and it is some of those qualities of the Germans which have been found to make them such formidable competitors in many of the markets of the world. Let me admit a decline—I mean a slackening—in the increase of our exports; and now I come to the point of what is desirable in order to arrest it. There are some rather interesting points. The Prime Minister was thinking of retaliating on special occasions, but there are symptoms that more retaliation and more protection is distinctly contemplated. It is highly probable that the scheme which is before the country will, rightly or wrongly—possibly wrongly—attract a considerable number who believe that it means a beginning of the protection of their interests or manufactures. I am told that in Glasgow the workmen hail the new departure because it would mean protection for the industries of Glasgow.

A very curious correspondence took place between my right hon. friend the Colonial Secretary and Mr. Vince, which has been published in the papers. The right hon. Gentleman was asked with reference to protecting trades, and he said that he would not protect trades against legitimate competition, but against illegitimate competition; whereupon his correspondent asked him whether sweating on the Continent, the conducting of a business in insanitary quarters, would be illegitimate competition. The right hon. Gentleman is reported to have said "Yes." If so, then you get, not the germ, but the plant of protection, already grown to a considerable height. If the conditions under which production takes place abroad are to determine whether we are to put on or take off taxes on certain goods, that is getting nearer to protection, and those who are in favour of protection may congratulate themselves. Those who go into this business only as retaliators, or as fair traders only, will find that in the end they will be landed in protection with all its difficulties, with all its dangers, with all the competition of one industry with another, with all the clamour of this industry against that industry, with all that mischief which we know exists in Colonial Legislature, and with regard to which Colonial Governors will be able to give us some information.

As regards retaliation, what is asked for, and no doubt it is very serious, is such powers as would enable the Government to take measures if some gigantic trust were crushing some industry of the country. I do not well see how that can be put into a mandate; but I believe if some extreme cases were to occur for which an absolutely heroic remedy was required the Government of the day, if they were strong enough, would take such measures as seemed indispensable to such an emergency. But, with a view to such an emergency, to recast our fiscal system seems to me inaugurating a new machinery for an emergency that may seldom, and perhaps never, occur. It is perfectly right of the Prime Minister to face the question; I honour the honesty with which he has spoken his mind on this subject, it shows how anxious he is to master these complicated problems, and to see what would be the best course to take to protect the country. He asked for retaliation. Now I would ask my noble friend in this connection whether he can produce correspondence with the German Government to show what has really taken place with regard to themselves and Canada. Here I am entirely with the Prime Minister, I would wish to have the commercial treaties examined. I wish to know precisely how we stand, and how far commercial treaties would support this or that object which is desired. I do not myself see my way to the review of all the commercial treaties at present. I would further wish to know the history of retaliation between different countries — how the countries have fared who have carried on this war of tariffs, a phrase which has an ugly sound certainly in the minds of those who belong to the past. But let us have the experience of how they have fared who have conducted this retaliatory campaign. I should like further to ask the Government what is their view—because I am sure they have got no plan in this respect—how are you going to retaliate? If you desire to retaliate, are you going to fix upon a particular industry which is supposed to be threatened, and in order to protect that retaliate by acting on the same industry abroad? In many cases you would be quite unable to do that. You would have to tax some foreign export to this country of a different character from your own export which you wish to protect; in fact it would be a competition and a clamouring between all the various interests.

There is no saying how deep a question of that kind goes. You retaliate in one direction and you make something dearer; those using that which is made dearer in this country clamour for similar treatment, or for the repeal of the particular injury which is being done their trade. You cannot protect one trade separately without protecting a number of others, you cannot protect one trade without injuring another. I say, therefore, that in this respect I wish an inquiry, not theoretical—I wish that it should be possible to place the facts before the country. I need not ask, I am sure, that in such an inquiry the utmost impartiality should prevail, and that we may count upon this, that the official organisations and the various Departments shall observe absolute neutrality and independence, and that no Departments are to collect statistics to serve any particular side, if there are sides taken in this matter. I shudder when I think of the electoral leaflets that will be spread over the country with regard to this plan on both sides. I would wish that the matter should be calmly discussed and taken out of the hands of the local agents, and that the local agents should have no instructions from headquarters as to the line it would be desirable to take. Let there be fair play all round in this respect. I have seen allusions to tables which might be prepared on hypothetical calculations and which would prove to the working man that he would have to pay only so much more for food and that he would get so much more wages. Hypothetical calculations are very dangerous things with which to deal when you pledge yourselves to the masses of the country as to any particular policy which you intend to pursue. Let there be perfect fair play in this respect.

I would make another appeal to the Government. The Prime Minister has told us that the plan would not come before the country for two or three years. His mind is unconvinced; and so, if his mind is unconvinced, I take it the Government as a whole is unconvinced. It is possibly conceivable, perhaps not very probable, that some catastrophe might happen which would precipitate a dissolution and would require this matter to be dealt with, one way or another, now instead of after the discussion which the Prime Minister thinks indispensable for the true eliciting of the opinions of the people. Well, then, I ask, and I think we almost have a right to demand, that, if there were such a dissolution, the mandate which is only to be asked for after conviction has been strengthened on a number of subjects, should not be made the mandate at the election before that inquiry has taken place, and before all the facts have been elicited. If it should take place, I for one have no hesitation in saying that I should think it the duty of all those who saw danger in this fiscal revolution to do their utmost to see that such a mandate should be refused. This discussion is to go on, and one thing I will ask his Majesty's Government which I am not in a position to ask except as one of the public. I would ask that the discussion may be so conducted, if possible, that, if the result should not be that we can assent to the views of the colonies, no rankling memories should be left behind from anything that is said on either side, by one political Party or the other here, or in their turn by the colonies.

Impatience is natural. There may be impatience; but let there not be irritation. Let us hope, if we do not see eye to eye, and if the colonies realise that they cannot press us in this matter because it involves the taxation of food, that no ill-feeling will be left behind, and that we can go forward on the road towards consolidating our Empire with equal confidence as in the past. The right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary used some words of terrible eloquence pointing to many lost opportunities—and opportunities have been lost—and pointing on the other hand to the glory of a consolidated Empire. He said—

> "That unless the question of trade and commerce were settled satisfactorily he for one did not believe in the continuance of the union of the Empire."

They are strong words, and he continued—

> "We have our chance, and it depends upon what we do now whether this great idea of consolidation is to find fruition, or whether we will for ever and ever dismiss this consideration and accept our fate as one of the dying Empires of the world."

We are to accept our fate as one of the dying Empires of the world if we refuse to tax the food of the people! Is the doom of the Empire to be pronounced on every platform if the people refuse to see their food taxed? Is it fair to put the mandate before the people—"No preference, no Empire?" I think it is unjust to the people of this country, I think it is unjust to the people of the colonies. I think it is unjust to the right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary himself, who has done so much and made such steady, and I hope permanent, progress in knitting the Empire together. That is his creed. Surely it is not to depend on commercial bargains with the colonies. Without commercial bargains the colonies have lavished their blood in South Africa, and without commercial bargains we have lavished our millions in the protection of our Empire, which includes the colonies, asking but little in return; and, under these circumstances, I am not to be told that if we cannot accept this plan we are to accept the fate of a dying Empire. The resources of statesmanship, I hope, are not exhausted. Before this idea was mooted many and many were the plans by which it was hoped the colonies might draw closer to us, and we retain our hold over the colonies. On that road the statesmen of both hemispheres must continue to work, undiscouraged if the result should be against the plan, undiscouraged by failure. Forward this Empire must go, not as a dying Empire, but as a living Empire in the world, and our statesmen must endeavour to realise the fair dream of a cemented Empire without the nightmare of tampering with the people's food.

THE EARL OF CREWE: My Lords, the noble Viscount who has just sat down began by saying he did not think he need apologise for introducing this subject to the notice of the House. I am sure everyone of your Lordships will agree with him in that statement, for it would indeed have been strange if a subject of such universal interest to every inhabitant of this Empire should not receive discussion in your Lordships' House at the earliest possible date. Certainly no apology could have been needed from the noble Viscount himself in bringing forward the subject, for nobody could have introduced it with such authority as the noble Viscount, both from his experience of private business and from his experience in managing the fiscal affairs of the country; and I think your Lordships will agree that he subjected the question to a most searching and, at the same time, most judicial analysis, in a manner which probably could not have been approached by any other Member of your Lordships' House. The noble Viscount, sitting as he does immediately behind Ministers, naturally devoted himself rather to the policy which has been brought before the country than to the other question of the singular manner in which that policy has been brought in. Perhaps I may be permitted, from this side of the House, to make one or two remarks on the latter subject. That policy, so far as we know it at present, is the policy of a single Minister. The noble Viscount stated in strong terms his conviction of the absolute honesty of purpose with which that policy had been brought in. I am quite willing to join with the noble Viscount in expressing that belief. I have not the least doubt that on this subject the mind of the Colonial Secretary is in a condition of genuine, even if somewhat excited, conviction, and in bringing it in the right hon. Gentleman has aroused in the minds of some of his colleagues a feeling of exceedingly strong opposition, while he has hypnotised others, including the Prime Minister, into a condition of coma or suspended animation.

We are told that this subject is one on which a difference of opinion may properly be held within the walls of the Cabinet, just as differences of opinion are held on many minor subjects. But what is the obvious difference? It is perfectly true that the Prime Minister holds, and has expressed, opinions on various subjects, such, for instance, as female suffrage, bimetallism, and Catholic education in Ireland, which are not those of the whole of his Party, but although the Prime Minister may have stated his opinion on these questions he has never made them the subject of propaganda. If you will allow me I will illustrate the matter by a hypothesis. Suppose that instead of becoming converted—if it is conversion—to the principles of fair trade and retaliation, the Colonial Secretary had instead become converted—perhaps I ought rather to say reconverted—to the principle of Home Rule for Ireland. It would have been possible for him no doubt to retain his position in the Ministry by stating that he did not consider the subject to be one now before the public, and after once expressing his opinion he could no doubt have gone on sitting as a colleague of noble Lords opposite. But if he had gone about the country instituting a Home Rule propaganda, would it have been possible for him to remain a member of a Unionist Government? And similarly one is inclined to ask: Is it possible for a fair trade Minister to remain a member of a free trade Government? But is this a free trade Government? If it is not a free trade Government but a fair trade Government, then, in turn, we ask the question: How is it that the Chancellor of the Exchequer remains a member of a fair trade Government?

We are told that all these differences are smoothed over by the fact that it is proposed to institute an inquiry into this question of preferential duties. I admit that the idea of an inquiry is exceedingly alluring and attractive. I am certainly one of those, and I know there are many in your Lordships' House, to whom any scheme would be welcome which would further consolidate the

Empire, and bring us into closer connection with the colonies, and if it were not that I am convinced that there is very considerable risk attaching to what is called an inquiry itself, as well as to the policy which that inquiry is intended to lead to, I for one would be most unwilling to express disapproval of the proposal to inquire into the subject. What is exactly meant by inquiry? So far as I know, inquiry can only take two forms, namely—a collection of statistics relating to our trade in all parts of the world, and the ascertaining of the opinions of our colonies on the questions involved. Anything else is not in the nature of an inquiry, but in the nature of a discussion, which is a totally different affair. Now, as regards statistics, I imagine that no person or body of persons is in a position to obtain statistics bearing on the question except His Majesty's Government. His Majesty's Government, through the reports of their Consuls and Vice-consuls to the Commercial Department of the Foreign Office, can secure all obtainable information with regard to the trade of other countries. Through the Colonial Office they can obtain any knowledge they wish with regard to the trade of our colonies, and they can obtain similar information through the India Office with regard to India. If that is so, if all the statistics could have been obtained would it not have been desirable to have obtained them, supposing they are not obtained, before the Colonial Secretary started off on the war-path?

Again, as regards the views of the colonies, it seems to me that it is impossible to obtain any idea of those views unless you are prepared to set positive proposals before each colony in turn. Of course, it would be possible to obtain an expression of general assent from the colonies as a whole if you were prepared to announce a general scheme entirely in favour of the colonies, and entirely from that point of view disadvantageous to this country. I mean that if you go to the colonies and say we are prepared to grant a preference to them on food stuffs —and also, I think, you must necessarily say to some extent on raw materials, because I cannot understand how any scheme of this kind could be carried through without a duty on timber and on wool—if you go to the colonies and say you are prepared to make these concessions, but, on the other hand, although you ask for a preference for your manufactured goods, you will not ask a preference which can in any way endanger the protected manufactures in the colonies themselves, and that, further, although you think as a matter of opinion that it would be a desirable and a pleasant thing if the colonies would contribute some larger proportion to the defence of the Empire, yet you have no idea of making any such question a bargain with them—if you go to them in that way I can well believe that you will receive a considerable measure of assent. But if, on the other hand, you are going as part of your inquiry to discover from each colony on what terms that particular colony will engage in a kind of preferential treaty with you I think you are embarking on an exceedingly dangerous course. It must be a dangerous course to excite hopes in a colony, hopes which for all you know, because you have not yet taken the opinion of the country, may never be realised. I cannot conceive any course which is more likely to cause friction between us and the various Colonial Governments.

The Earl of Crewe.

There is one person who sees no need for inquiry, and that person, of course, is the Colonial Secretary himself. The Colonial Secretary's mind on this subject is not open; on the contrary, it is absolutely closed. Speaking in Birmingham on May 16th the right hon. Gentleman said,

> "My policy is to meet everything the Colonies do"

—that is to say, in the way of preferential duties. He said—

> "Even if the price of food is raised, the rate of wages will certainly be raised in greater proportion. If we were able to bargain on equal terms, I believe that the duties now imposed on our produce would be generally reduced."

And, he continued, as regarded old-age pensions—and this seems to me a very strong thing to say—he would not himself look at the matter—that is to say, the matter of increasing the price of the food of the people—unless he felt able to promise that a large scheme for the provision of such pensions for thrifty and well-conducted persons would be assured by a revision of our system of import duties. There are other statements made by the right hon. Gentleman in another place, which are, if anything, stronger. I do not see much of the humble but earnest seeker after truth in those remarks. They are the utterances of a man who has finally made up his mind. The noble Viscount deprecated, as I think properly, recourse to mere authority and the introduction of famous names into this controversy. Well, Mr. Chamberlain invokes the shades of Cobden and Bright in support of his theory. He says—

> "I cannot believe that if Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright had been present among us now they would have hesitated to make a treaty of preference and reciprocity with our own children."

I confess, when I read that, that my only feeling was one of astonishment that during the late war Mr. Chamberlain had not declared his conviction that if Mr. Bright had been here he would probably have raised a troop of yeomanry to be despatched to the front under the title of Bright's Horse. Mr. Cobden died in 1865, but Mr. Bright lived on till 1889, and Mr. Bright, therefore, not merely directed the original free trade controversy, but was in the thick of the fair trade and retaliatory controversy to which the noble Viscount alluded. What did Mr. Bright say then? He wrote, on this very question of protection—

> "Victoria may discover that industry has no greater enemy than protective or restrictive tariffs."

And in the same letter he spoke fully of attempting to build up special interests before their time. In 1879 he wrote that—

> "The reciprocity notion is exactly adapted to catch the considerable class of simpletons who have memory and no logic."

After that I confess, unless, of course, the Colonial Secretary is able to show that the circumstances of the Empire have entirely changed during the last twenty years, that it seems to me a strong order to invoke the name of Mr. Bright in support of this scheme. I can only arrive at this conclusion. The Secretary for the Colonies is, as I said, absolutely positive that his views are correct. If so, he must have some new *data* not accessible to the world, showing that a new state of things has arisen, at any rate, one may say, since 1891, when this subject was last debated in your Lordships' House, on the motion of the noble Earl, Lord Dunraven, and when Lord Salisbury considered that the matter was not one of practical politics; and of course one must assume he has communicated those new facts to his colleagues sitting opposite. If so, I repeat my surprise that the Cabinet, before allowing this question to become a matter, as it must become, of somewhat heated controversy, did not publish those facts to the world; but if not, if Mr. Chamberlain has formed his decided opinion only on facts of common knowledge which are accessible to anybody who has the industry to read the Blue-books, then it appears to me that he in his turn is repeating shibboleths, the only difference being that his are fair trade shibboleths, and those which we are told we cannot repeat are free trade shibboleths. Therefore I cannot see on what ground the statement is made that we should suspend our judgment, and not express our conviction of the danger involved in the proposal.

The noble Viscount made an appeal to His Majesty's Government to preserve an absolute impartiality in the campaign which is about to be held in the country on this subject, and he pointed out that it was likely that literature of all kinds would be published. I wonder what form that literature is going to take when issued from Conservative organisations. Is it proposed either to issue no literature at all, or else to issue alternately leaflets describing the theories of Mr. Cobden and other leaflets containing the doctrines of the Fair Trade League? Is it proposed to send round reversible placards containing on one side the words, "Vote for Ritchie and Cheap Bread" and on the other side "Vote for Chamberlain and Reciprocity," because unless something of that kind is going to be done I do not see how the impartiality for which the noble Viscount asks is to be maintained. I suppose that in East Manchester and other places where people have no settled convictions, copies of both sets of literature and both kinds of placards will be distributed and displayed. The Prime Minister has stated that he has not been able so far to form any conviction on this subject; but we have always been used to look to the noble Duke for a very candid judgment on any broad political issue, and I can hardly think he will consent to leave this House and the country in general in doubt as to his views on this subject. I should like to ask the noble Duke if he really believes from his experience—for, after all, the noble Duke has been in the very forefront of politics for more than thirty years—that it is possible to carry on the government of this country under such principles of Cabinet responsibility or irresponsibility as those to which we are now treated, and I would venture further to ask him if he considers that the position as a whole is in any way fair, either to the country or to our Colonial Empire.

I only desire to say one or two words on the policy itself, on which the noble Viscount dwelt with such unequalled force and fulness. I have not the least idea of discussing the whole question of the merits of free trade, or what the average duties on food supplies would be likely to be, or the possibility of retaliation and the foreign complications which might follow. I merely desire to submit two instances of what might possibly occur if this policy were carried through. As regards old-age pensions, it has always been the belief of the Colonial Secretary that such pensions could only be given to those whom he has described as "thrifty and well conducted persons"—that is to say, those who could not be considered thrifty and well conducted would not obtain pensions. I hope I am not doing the right hon. Gentleman an injustice when I say that I believe that his opinion is that the test of thrift and good conduct would have to be the fact of subscribing to some friendly society. I yield to nobody in my admiration of the work of friendly societies, but I should be sorry to think that among the very poor there are not a great many highly deserving persons who are not subscribers to friendly societies. There are some who have never earned enough to subscribe to friendly societies, and there are others who have met with misfortunes, whose health has broken down, and who may be in the highest degree deserving but are not subscribers to friendly societies. Well, all that class of persons could only lose by this proposal. The only prospect which is held out to the very poor is that of having to pay more for their food, without having, as far as I can see, any extra provision for their old age. But there is a much more serious consideration, and one which affects us and also our colonies. When a tax is placed upon foreign corn and foreign articles of food, one is bound to assume that the price either of corn, of meat, or whatever it may be, will rise at home. If it does not rise it is perfectly obvious that Mr. Chamberlain's great object would be defeated, because if foreign corn can still be sent at its present price at a profit, that is no reason why it should be displaced in favour of colonial produce.

Assume that Mr. Chamberlain is right in believing that a gradual transfer will take place of production of food-stuffs from foreign countries to our colonies, that process must be a gradual one. All those great areas of possible supply of which we hear so much cannot spring into productiveness in a moment, and in the meantime you have an enhanced price of food at home. That, of course, encourages production at home. I do not know whether any of your Lordships have ever walked on the deserted quays of Galway and looked up at the empty warehouses there. Galway was said to have been ruined by free trade. I do not know that any tax on corn would revive Galway, but it would revive wheat growing in such counties as Lincolnshire and Essex. It would no doubt stimulate for a time the production of corn in those and other counties, but as years go on and our colonies begin to grow more and more corn and send it in much cheaper they will gradually begin to ruin the farmers of Essex and Lincolnshire, as those farmers have been now ruined by the United States. I live in a county where the cheese-making industry is an important one. Our principal rival is not a foreign country but a colony. I cannot say that I have ever noticed, in discussing the subject, that the eye of a farmer has particularly kindled with enthusiasm at the idea that his chief trade was being seriously competed with by colonial imports, and it seems to me that it is a great deal to ask of a class of people, who are altogether untravelled and to a very considerable degree unread, that they should so enter into the meaning of Empire as to be prepared to view with absolute cheerfulness and content severe competition with their trade from distant parts of the Empire. It is my firm belief that when this scheme is carried through in its entirety and succeeds, which I am assuming for the purposes of this argument, having accustomed the people of this country to protection you will find them asking to be protected against the colonies. They will be inclined to ask: "Why not?" They will say: "Here are producers of manufactured articles in the colonies who have for years maintained duties against similar manufactured articles at home." A farmer may well ask: "If a maker of manufactured articles in Australia who taxes British goods of the same kind may be regarded as a high-souled Imperialist, why am I, who ask for a small duty on colonial corn, to be regarded as a Little Englander?"

The noble Duke the Leader of the House was present the other day at a meeting of the Iron and Steel Institute. In the course of his speech the noble Duke said, in a humorous vein, that he would be very glad to see the iron and steel industry here receive the same measure of protection which that industry had received in the United States. But he added that he knew it was hopeless, because if he asked for protection all other interests would ask for protection as well. I would ask the noble Duke whether the converse is not true, that when he has protected the British farmer in all his different branches, and those who are competed with by importations of foodstuffs, will not his shareholders then turn round and demand some measure of protection for the iron and steel industry? If that is so, what will you have done? You will have altered the entire fiscal system of this country from a free trade system to a protective system. That evidently would be a matter of regret even to those who follow the Colonial Secretary. The Colonial Secretary affirms that he is no protectionist, and that he does not say for a moment whether a protective system is right or wrong for this country. But one thing you will have done. You will have removed yourselves further from the possibility of a real Zollverein, such as exists in America, than you are at the present moment. After all, the nominal object of all this is, as I understand, to draw us into closer union with the colonies, and if I am right in supposing that, in course of time, assuming this scheme to run on the smoothest of wheels, the effects will be such as I have described, it surely is an exceedingly strong argument against embarking on the scheme at all. I have tried to show that certain risks attach to the mere act of what is called inquiring into this subject, and I have indicated at least one danger which seems to me by no means an incredible one if the policy is carried through. But, as a matter of fact, what we are in for is really not an inquiry so much as a campaign, thanks to the Colonial Secretary, and to the Colonial Secretary alone. The noble Viscount, in his very eloquent peroration, expressed a hope that this matter might be discussed with as little fervour as possible, and, at any rate, with complete absence of anything like acrimony. Well, I cannot honestly say that I think the part the Colonial Secretary has taken will tend to make that easier for anybody, and if in the course of the controversy severe things are said—and I quite agree with the noble Viscount that it would be very much better if this matter could be coolly discussed—it will be very largely due to the fact that this scheme has been introduced in a manner which I can only describe as involving a more wanton and reckless venture than any that has been plunged into by any statesman within the memory of noble Lords present.

LORD AVEBURY: My Lords, like the noble Viscount who introduced this debate, I have been much surprised to see in the Press, and to hear in conversation, doubts so often expressed as to the wisdom of our free trade policy, and lugubrious apprehensions as to the present position and future prospects of our commerce and manufactures. No doubt competition is very severe, and if we are to hold our own, we must exert ourselves and throw away no opportunity. We must, for instance, do more in the study of modern languages and technical education. While, however, there is every reason for industry and exertion, there seems to me no ground for despondency, nor any economic reason for changing the fiscal policy of the country. Our manufacturers are sometimes criticised for a want of energy and adaptiveness, but at any rate foreign manufacturers do not venture, if they can help it, to compete with ours without claiming protection. Now what is the present position? How does our commerce stand? The total of our exports and imports last year was the largest volume of commerce ever transacted by either our own or any other country in the history of the world. The policy of free trade must, indeed, it seems to me, stand or fall by general considerations. The problem is extremely complex; allowances must be made for increase of population, for new processes, for improvements in the steam engine, economies in manufacture and transport, and the figures are liable to many considerations from other points of view. Still, the statistics are remarkable, and they seem to me conclusive.

Let us, then, see how the facts really stand. There has been an enormous increase in our trade, and the expansion coincided remarkably with the adoption of our free trade policy. For the first fifty years of the last century our trade showed but slow progress. After free trade it went up by leaps and bounds. In 1805 the value of our exports was, in round numbers, £40,000,000; in 1850 it was a little more than £60,000,000—an increase of about £20,000,000 in fifty years. In 1900 they were £280,000,000, an increase in the next fifty years of no less than £200,000,000. Moreover, if we take the figures every five or ten years, the result comes out even more clearly. At the beginning of the century, as already mentioned, our exports were £40,000,000. The Corn Laws were abolished in 1846, at which time they were about £55,000,000. In 1850 they were about £60,000,000; in 1855, £89,000,000; in 1860, £130,000,000; in 1,865, £144,000,000; in 1870, £188,000,000; in 1880, £223,000,000; in 1,890, £263,000,000; and in 1900, £283,000,000.

The great rise followed, therefore, very closely the free trade policy. But it is often said that other countries are making greater progress. Let us then compare our own figures with those of other countries. I might well omit the United States, because the enormous tracts of virgin soil and the great immigration render any comparison quite misleading. Still, the increase in our total trade in the five years ending in 1900, the last for which we have complete figures, has rather exceeded that of the United States. In the case of the other great protective countries, the balance in our favour has been greater. In the five years the total trade of Russia rose about £12,000,000; that of France, £80,000,000; that of Germany, £150,000,000; that of the United Kingdom, £170,000,000! Moreover, the figures are the more remarkable if we bear in mind the great falling off in prices. For some purposes the weight would be a better criterion of trade than the value. It is not indeed possible to obtain such figures with any accuracy. Mr. Williamson has, however, calculated out for the Chamber of Shipping the total weight represented by the exports and imports, and his results may, I think, be taken as being approximately correct. He estimates the total weight of our exports and imports as having been for 1880, 53,000,000 tons; 1890, 75,000,000 tons; 1900, 102,500,000 tons. So that they have practically doubled in twenty years. Take another test—the total tonnage, steam and sailing, entered and cleared with cargoes or ballast, at ports in the United Kingdom. In 1860 the tonnage was 59,000,000; in 1880, 133,000,000; and in 1900, 209,000,000.

Another test is to take the figures per head. The special exports for the last five years were: United Kingdom, £5 19s. 5d.; France, £3 15s.; Germany, £3 7s. 2d; United States, £2 18s. 4d. But then the question arises: Has the trade been profitable? Here also the figures seem conclusive. Six years ago, the assessment for Income Tax under Schedule D, that which comprises profits of trade, was £254,000,000, but last year it was £347,000,000, showing an increase of over £90,000,000 in six years. Or take the death duties, which Mr. Gladstone used to regard as perhaps the best criterion of prosperity. The value on which estate duty was paid was £219,000,000; in 1902 it was £276,000,000, showing an increase of over £57,000,000. Surely, then, we ought to see our way very clearly before we tamper with a policy which has been so splendidly successful.

It has been said that a rise in the price of food might be met by a rise in wages. That may be, but if so a rise in wages would necessitate a rise in prices, and a rise in prices would, of course, seriously cripple our manufactures in the competition of the world. A difference has, I see, been drawn between raw materials and food. It is understood that the Government would not, under any circumstances, consent to tax raw materials. But, in the long run, a tax on food would hamper our manufactures in the same way as a tax on raw materials. The word Protection is misleading. The fact is that a country can only protect one trade at the expense of the others. Germany, for instance, is held out to us as an example because she subsidises her shipping, gives bounties to sugar-growers, protection to farmers, to metals, to textile, and various other industries. But who pays? The unfortunate German manufacturer finds the food of his family and workpeople raised by the protection of agriculture; his children have to pay more for their sugar in consequence of the sugar bounties; his clothing, and that of those dependent on him, is dearer on account of the exclusion of foreign tissues; he has to pay more than he used for any manufactures or machinery he has to buy; and he is taxed to promote canals and to subsidise steamship companies. Last, but not least, he has to fight in the Reichstag, or there is no knowing what additional burdens might be imposed upon him. And, over and above all the other uncertainties of commerce, he never knows whether his own Government may not ruin him, either by subsidising some rival industry, or by depriving him of some special privilege.

Our colonies have unfortunately adopted the policy of taxing the farmer and the grazier to bolster up manufactories which can only be made to pay at the expense of the agricultural interest. They sacrifice a guinea to make £1. We often hear complaints that we have only one-sided free trade, but free trade is good for a country whether other countries are wise enough to adopt it or not. Protectionist nations, in endeavouring to exclude foreign goods, tend to exclude themselves from other markets. The favoured-nation clause is the real sheet anchor of our commerce. On that we must, and may fairly, insist both for ourselves and for our colonies. So far, however, is there any evidence that we are losing ground in other parts of the Empire? in India and the colonies? Not at all. In four years our imports into India have increased 10,000,000 tens of rupees; those of the whole of the rest of the world 5,600,000. Into New Zealand and Australia our imports have increased £8,000.000, against £6,000,000. If we compare our increase in Australia and New Zealand with that of a single country, even Germany, we find £8,000,000 against a German increase of £1,000,000. In fifteen years, with our colonies as a whole, the increase has been for the United Kingdom, £15,000,000; for Germany, £6,000,000; for France, £1,000,000. In fact, our competition in colonial markets is not so much with foreign manufacturers as with colonial producers. As Sir A. Bateman says in his admirable Memorandum that the figures—

> "Do not show any displacement of the export trade of the United Kingdom in the period in question (fifteen years to 1900) by any one of our three principal competitors."

From a political point of view, however, the desire for closer relations between different parts of the Empire is important and satisfactory. Canada has shown her friendly feeling to the mother country by granting our trade a preference, and we greatly appreciate this evidence of goodwill. Moreover, I am very pleased to see that Canada has herself benefited by the reduction. Our trade has increased £3,000,000 with Canada, and the result to Canada has been that her people have got an increased supply of cheap goods, her agriculture has benefited, farmers are flocking in from the United States and settling up the far west. If she would pursue the same policy further she would, I feel sure, inaugurate a period of immense progress and prosperity. Her farmers would save in the price of clothing, implements, machinery, and, in fact, in all the manufactured articles they use, while they would get the same or even a better price for the produce of their land. A similar policy on the part of other colonies would be equally beneficial to them. But, unfortunately, the duties are in many cases still so high that even with the reduction of 25 per cent. they are almost prohibitive. Now, if those on our goods are prohibitive, it does not help our trade to make those on foreign countries still higher. Before we can judge we must know, not only the difference between the duties on our goods and those of foreign producers, but also that between the duties on our goods and those of colonial producers.

I regretted a statement attributed, I hope, and cannot but think, erroneously to Mr. Seddon that if we spurned the offer from New Zealand, she would make overtures to other countries. We have, I need not say, spurned no offer from New Zealand. We are not yet aware that any offer has been made, or, if so, what it is. But what have we done with reference to New Zealand? We have admitted her produce free, while she has taxed ours—not merely for revenue purposes, but in order to keep out our goods. We have, in fact, done all we could to encourage trade; until now her object has been to discourage it. If New Zealand will do as we have done, if she will take off protective duties imposed against our manufacturers, they will not, I feel sure, ask for any preference as against foreign producers. Australia also has a tariff specially designed—not only for revenue, but to discourage trade. We should certainly welcome a disposition on the part of the colonies to lower the barriers they have raised against trade, and to encourage instead of discouraging commerce with the mother country. It has been suggested that a tax should be put on foreign produce in all parts of the Empire whether with or without a corresponding Excise duty has not been stated, and that the proceeds should form an Imperial fund for the defence of the Empire. Some such fund is desirable, and, indeed, necessary, if the Empire is worth maintaining, for it is evident that one part of the Empire cannot permanently bear the whole burden of the Army and Navy. It seems to me, however, impossible that we can be expected to commit ourselves to any vague resolutions. For my own part, I am prepared to examine any proposals which would tend to develop our commerce with the colonies, and to strengthen the bonds which unite the various parts of the Empire But till we know what the proposals are, we shall, I submit, be wise to suspend our judgment. The difficulties are great—they may be insuperable; but while the colonies may feel sure that we shall consider their suggestions in a friendly and sympathetic spirit, still as men of business they cannot expect us to do anything which will cripple or endanger that magnificent commerce, on which the comfort and prosperity of our people so greatly depends.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of LANSDOWNE): My Lords, whether your Lordships agree or disagree with the speech in which the noble Viscount behind me introduced this subject, I do not think I shall be contradicted when I say that we, one and all, listened to it with feelings of sincere admiration. I doubt whether any speech which has been recently delivered in this House has more moved the audience which listened to it. And, my Lords, as far as what I conceive to be the operative part of that speech is concerned, I certainly do not desire to express disagreement from him; because I understood him to suggest to your Lordships that it was necessary that before we committed ourselves to any extensive departure from those free trade principles which have so long prevailed in this country, we should, with the utmost caution and with great fulness and impartiality, examine the subject with which we were about to deal. The noble Viscount asked that that examination should be thorough, fearless, and impartial. He stipulated, above all things, that, so far as the Government Departments were concerned, the inquiry should be conducted without anything which could be regarded as a lead from any of His Majesty's Ministers. I am gladly able to give him that assurance, and I am able to say with confidence that if we collect statistics or arguments it will be with the desire which possesses him of arriving at the truth and not with the desire of making good any particular thesis or theory.

My Lords, the noble Lord who followed the noble Viscount objected, as I understood him, altogether to any inquiry as likely to lead to inconvenient results; and he claimed, as an advocate of a similar view, the Colonial Secretary himself, who, he said, had propounded the plan without waiting for that investigation which some of us consider so necessary. He is mistaken in that view, because I find that throughout the speeches which Mr. Chamberlain has delivered he has constantly suggested that this was a question for discussion and examination; in one of the latest of them he used these words—

> "Everybody knows that a plan is absolutely impossible until we know a great deal of matters into which we have still to inquire."

That is a position which I for one am entirely willing to accept.

The noble Lord found fault with us because some of us have made no secret of the fact that we approach this investigation with widely divergent opinions as to the results which it is likely to produce. I do not suppose the noble Lord will complain of us for having in our minds different opinions on a subject so intricate. I gather that his complaint is rather that we have made it public to the country that those differences exist. Now, my Lords, I submit to your Lordships that we are not censurable for having allowed these divergencies of opinion to become apparent. We have not proposed any measure to the country. The noble Viscount spoke constantly of the plan and the scheme; but, my Lords, that plan is not one to which any Member of His Majesty's Government is irrevocally committed. It is a plan which has been put forward as a basis for discussion.

THE EARL OF CREWE: The Colonial Secretary spoke continually of "his policy."

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: His policy which he puts forward as a basis for free and open discussion—"the discussion to which we invite the House and the country"—those are the Colonial Secretary's words—"the suggestions which I put forward." Well, my Lords, I shall not waste time in describing the magnitude of the questions which we are invited to discuss. They are questions of a most momentous character. They affect not only the finances of this country, not only our financial relations with the colonies, but our financial relations with the whole civilised world; and if they affect our fiscal relations they affect our political relations also. And, my Lords, surely it is not necessary for me to say that we should never have launched this question upon the area of public discussion if there had not been circumstances which seemed to us to make inevitable that such a discussion should take place. Let me say one word with regard to one or two of those circumstances. In the first place, your Lordships will recollect that in 1897, and at the beginning of last year, there took place in this country those important conferences at which the representatives of the great colonies were present. Now, both in 1897 and last year this question of colonial preference was put in the very forefront of the schemes which were before the conferences for discussion. Let me read to your Lordships the resolutions of the conference of last year:—

> "That this conference recognises that the principle of preferential trade between the United Kingdom and His Majesty's dominions beyond the seas would stimulate and facilitate mutual commercial intercourse, and would, by promoting the development of the resources and industries of the several parts, strengthen the Empire."
>
> "That with a view, however, of promoting the increase of trade within the Empire it is desirable that those colonies which have not already adopted such a policy should, as far as their circumstances permit, give substantial preferential treatment to the products and manufactures of the United Kingdom."

Then there proceeded from each colony a statement of the extent of the preference which might be expected. Do not suppose, my Lords, that these discussions at the Colonial Conference can be treated as discussions at some unimportant debating society. These distinguished colonial statesmen came here for the purpose of doing business; and it is impossible for us, having those Resolutions before us, lightly to brush them on one side, and to refuse to examine the conclusions to which they point.

In the case of one colony in particular—Canada—the question has assumed a particularly urgent character. Your Lordships may remember that in 1897 the Canadian Government offered a preferential tariff to any country which would admit colonial imports on certain terms fulfilling certain conditions of reciprocity. That offer was particularly designed to give advantage to the commerce of this country; but there was an obstacle in the way of our accepting the Canadian offer, for this reason, that the commercial treaty of 1865, which was then in force, bound the colonies to admit imports from other countries upon terms not less advantageous than those offered to the imports of the mother country. The Canadian Government desired to be relieved from that obligation, and accordingly the then Government, of which the noble Viscount was a member, denounced the commercial treaty of 1865, and it expired in July, 1898. That obstacle having been got out of the way, the Canadian Government proceeded to offer to this country alone a preferential tariff, giving to British imports an advantage of 33⅓ per cent., and that offer was, I need not say, accepted. I should say that to the imports of other countries the Canadian Government continued the former tariff arrangements, all foreign imports being admitted on a single and impartial tariff.

Now observe what happened. The commercial treaty of 1865 having been got rid of, negotiations commenced between this country and Germany for a new commercial treaty, and an arrangement was eventually authorised by the German Federal Council giving to this country and to the British colonies the most-favoured-nation treatment, Canada alone being excepted from such terms. As was to be expected, the Canadian Government protested against this, and we supported that protest by the best arguments we could produce. We pointed out that no privileges were taken away from Germany, and that her imports into Canada remained on the same footing as the imports of all other foreign Powers; but our protests did not prevail; and the result was that after waiting five years—that is to say, in the spring of the present year—the Canadian Government placed a surtax on imports from Germany. That surtax has led to a considerable amount of discussion and to correspondence which is still in progress; the course of which we have been given to understand, first, that Canada is liable to find herself subject to further differential treatment by the German Government, and not only that, but that if, as probably would be the case, other British colonies should follow the example of Canada and give a preference to British imports, then this country, the mother country, in spite of the fact that we open our ports widely to German imports—this country will probably not be allowed to continue in the receipt of the most-favoured-nation terms. This intimation seems to us to create a very serious situation.

VISCOUNT GOSCHEN: Will my noble friend be able to lay despatches on the Table with reference to this matter?

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: Papers were laid at the time when the treaty was denounced, and I shall probably be able to lay further Papers, but I cannot give an undertaking as to Papers relating to matters still under discussion between the two Governments. Well, my Lords, that is the situation with which we are face to face. A British colony has been made to suffer for the preference given to the mother country, and the mother country has had it intimated to her, and not obscurely, that she will be denied the most-favoured-nation treatment if other British colonies do the same thing. I am anxious for the House to understand that we do not for a moment dispute the right of Germany to resort to measures of this kind; but what are we to do? Are we to tell the Canadian Government frankly that we are unable to help them? Are we to tell the Canadian Government that they have got into trouble owing to their desire to deal liberally with our commerce, and therefore we invite them to take back the preference they gave us in 1898? Neither of these courses would be a course which any Colonial Minister would find it very agreeable to take; and surely we are not unreasonable when, in view of the situation I have endeavoured to describe, we propose that the whole of this question of the possibility of making special arrangements for national trade as between the mother country and the colonies—that the whole of that important question should be thoroughly considered *de novo*. If we had refused to give that amount of consideration to the requirements of the colonies, I think we should have displayed to the world an amount of indifference to Canadian interests and to Canadian sentiment which I do not believe is felt by any Member of this House.

So much as to the colonial case. But there is another matter which greatly affects the issue before us. The form which protection takes has sensibly altered during recent years. Foreign countries no longer restrict their activity to the protection of their own market. They give a kind of protection which assumes an offensive shape, and which leads to the invasion of the markets of other countries by the highly protected produce of the countries to which I have referred. Sheltered by constantly increasing tariffs, there have grown up in several parts of Europe huge trade combinations' or trusts, which not only monopolise the home market of their own country, but which lead to the production of vast quantities of goods which the home market is unable to absorb, and which are sold at very low rates, in some cases below the cost price, in the markets of other countries. These transactions are only rendered possible by large bounties, given sometimes by the Government itself, sometimes by trading associations; but whether by associations or by the Government it does not matter, so far as the result is concerned. No industry can stand up against competition carried on in these conditions. Let me read a short extract from a work lately published by a well known Continental writer on trusts, Dr. Raffalovich—

> "Such action in regard to exportation is becoming more and more frequent. In Germany, for example, it is practised in every branch of the export trade. The following details show to what extent has been developed in that country the system of lowering the price of goods for export in order to keep up the price on the home market. The syndicate of rail manufacturers sells rails in Germany at 115 marks the ton and at 85 marks abroad; sheet iron is sold at 125 marks a ton in the home market, and at 100 marks a ton on the foreign market; the union of nail manufacturers sells its products at 250 marks a ton in Germany and at 140 marks a ton abroad. The absurdity of the system in respect of the home market was very well shown last year during the period of the so-called 'coal famine,' when the price of pit coal in Germany rose to 18·50 marks the ton, while it was being at the same moment exported to Austria at 8·80 marks a ton. This system of throwing on the market goods at a price below the market price is evidently extremely troublesome and ruinous to the countries into which the goods are imported, for it seriously disturbs the national industry. From this point of view the activity displayed by the syndicates can be justly considered and branded as unfair competition. The danger of such proceedings, which it is impossible to hinder, has increased since syndicates in various countries have begun to make agreements among themselves; there are now in existence several score of such syndicates. . . . It seems to us that it would be particularly fitting that the question of this fatal activity should be examined from the international point of view, precisely at this moment when the period for the expiration of commercial treaties is approaching, and when we are face to face with the very serious question of their renewal."

I know, my Lords, we are sometimes told that these huge importations of cheap commodities are blessings in disguise, and that we ought to be grateful for them. I do not profess to be an authority on fiscal matters, but I am bound to express, as a layman, my belief that a moderate trade carried on on a sound basis is in the end a much more profitable trade than one at one moment artificially inflated and the next contracted by this artificial interference.

This question has often been discussed. I happened the other day to come upon a very eloquent description of the objections which may be raised to these imports of cheap bounty-fed goods by one who was a high authority upon political economy, and who was one of the most staunch free traders whom I ever came across—I mean the late Sir Louis Mallet. The argument was used that if we made difficulties in accepting these cheap bounty fed goods we might just as well refuse to accept them in the imaginary case where somebody might offer them to us as a present for nothing at all. This is how Sir Louis Mallet dealt with the argument. He said—

> "I will make another equally legitimate hypothesis—namely, that every country with which we trade made a present of the whole of their exports to us for a series of years. Juicy beefsteaks twice a day, doubtless, as your correspondent suggests, wheat, sugar, and other excellent things gratis, and a very pleasant

time generally for the consumer while it lasted. But how long would it last? And what then? And what should we find at the end? The industries of all countries dislocated, an immense destruction of fixed capital, our customers ruined, and, by the great stimulus to consumption with no corresponding production, the British consumer demoralised and pauperised—a state of things from which we should only recover by awaking gradually and painfully to a recognition of the truth that the only foundation of a healthy and permanent trade is mutually profitable exchange, and not the giving and receiving of alms."

Those seem to me to be wise words. One result of the continued admission of the products of these syndicates and trade combinations, which are becoming more numerous and audacious with every year that passes, may be that the foreigner will begin by getting possession of the market, will crush out our industries, and when he has succeeded in crushing them out will then raise the price to his own profit.

Now, in the case of one commodity, we have already taken a very important step, and, I think, a step in advance—I mean in the case of sugar. Your Lordships will recollect the West Indian Commission, and the Report which that Commission gave of the effect that bounties have had upon the West Indian sugar trade, and next upon the sugar industry in this country. As the result of the inquiry of that Commission we took part in the Brussels Conference of last year; and although we had taken part in more than one similar conference or convention, we took part in this conference for the first time upon the understanding that our delegates were to be free to consent to the adoption of penal measures against sugar imported into this country under unfair conditions of production. Well, that was a long step in advance. Your Lordships will be asked before the end of the session to deal with a Bill as the result of our participation in the Brussels Conference. But sugar is not a solitary case of this kind of illegitimate competition; these combinations have extended to coal, to the manufacture of all sorts of iron goods, to spirits, chemicals, paper, and to a number of other industries besides. These combinations are the outcome of entirely modern developments, developments which I do not think were dreamt of by those at whose feet we sat many years ago when we first studied these subjects. I do not think with those developments confronting us that we can afford to remain intrenched in the old positions, and to refuse to consider measures which might be necessary, which might be effectual, for the purpose of enabling us to meet the tremendous strain to which the commerce of our country is thus exposed.

Having said that, I desire to admit fully that the burden of proof is with those who desire to alter our fiscal system in order to deal with these evils. I admit, for example, the immense difficulty of framing a fiscal system which might be applicable to the varying requirements of the whole of our colonies; I admit, as the noble Lord on the back bench contended just now, that this country has greatly prospered under free trade; and I admit that, by adhering to free trade, we have been able to avoid, as a Government, dealing with a number of extremely difficult problems concerning the interests of competing industries in this country, and concerning the possibly conflicting interests of the different colonies, problems which any Government is fortunate if it can leave to be dealt with locally instead of dealing with them themselves. All that I frankly admit. But I do think that the time has come when we must consider what kind of free trade it is that this country enjoys at the present moment. It is true that we are enjoying free trade in the sense of unrestricted imports. But free trade, in my humble judgment, means a good deal more than that; and, although I do not for a moment dispute the account given by noble Lords to-night of the prosperous condition of the country, I do hear, occasionally, murmurs which indicate some misgiving as to the future, a feeling of uneasiness that other countries are making more rapid progress than we are, and that, in some markets at any rate, we are no longer competing with the foreigner as successfully as we were wont formerly. But, be that as it may, I do not think we should discuss these questions upon the asumption that commercial prosperity is the all in all of the matter. I hear it said that the Empire is founded upon trade; so it is, I daresay. But, supposing that we do find ourselves face to face with a position in which, unless we are able to discover some means of drawing the colonies closer to ourselves, we should find them gradually drifting further and further away from us, is not that a contingency which it is worth making some sacrifice to avoid?

I for one should not be deterred from examining these questions with an open mind, because I am told that the result of any changes which may be made may affect by a few thousand pounds the volume of our national trade. What we have to consider, it seems to me, is what is the sacrifice that we are asked to make; is it a sacrifice we can bear, and what are we going to get in return for the sacrifice? All those are matters which we cannot ascertain without full and careful investigation. It seems to me at any rate that these two problems emerge and require our attention. Can we or can we not do something to bring about a closer fiscal unity between ourselves and the colonies, and can we or can we not do something to protect the commerce of this country against the kind of illegitimate competition which I have described? It may be that we shall find it possible to work upon only one of these lines, and not upon both; it may be that we shall not be able to do much; but I do protest altogether against being invited to say without further examination that we are able to do nothing at all. If I spoke my own mind to the House, I should be inclined to say that we might, at all events in so far as the colonies are concerned, look forward to the careful scrutiny of our commercial treaties with the object if possible of finding some means of adapting them to the requirements of those colonies. And with regard to the question of retaliation, I cannot help hoping that just as we have hardened our hearts in the case of sugar, and have committed ourselves to steps for the purpose of preventing the invasion of this country by bounty-fed sugar, so we may find it possible to deal in a similar spirit with similar aggressions in respect of other kinds of industries and manufactures. I am strengthened in that belief because I have certainly during the last year or two detected signs that other countries are by no means unprepared to discuss questions of this kind with us in a reasonable spirit.

To my mind the present position, in which we are absolutely helpless, absolutely unable to defend ourselves, is almost intolerable. To me we seem to be in the position of a man who in some lawless country enters unarmed a room in which every one else carries a revolver in his pocket; the man without a revolver is not likely to be very considerately treated. If we take the opportunity of supplying ourselves with a revolver, and let it be seen by everybody that we have got one, and that it is a rather larger revolver than everybody else's, my own impression is that we shall find ourselves carefully let alone. I say, if I may pursue the analogy, that our revolver will be a much larger one than everybody else's, because our market is a much larger market than anybody else's, and the threat of closing any part of that market to foreign commodities is a threat which no foreign Power can afford to treat lightly. In that case it is perfectly conceivable that it would not be necessary for us to resort to actual measures of retaliation, and we should be able to comfort ourselves with the reflection that we had won a victory for free trade by the use of weapons stolen from the arsenal of our antagonists.

I, at any rate, think it is our duty to regard in a tolerant spirit and with an open mind the proposals for dealing with these important questions. I, at any rate, can see nothing ignominious in the admission that such questions are capable of being dealt with in a great variety of detail; and I fail to see that there is anything unconstitutional or irregular or disrespectful to Parliament or to the public in asking that these questions should be thrown down for free and open discussion. We are, I am happy to say, to this extent, I think, agreed—that investigation is necessary. The noble Viscount, Lord Goschen, asked for it. Lord Rosebery, who is no longer in the House, and who delivered an eloquent speech on the subject last week, asked for investigation. The Colonial Secretary asks for investigation. The Prime Minister has expressed his desire for it. Well, my Lords, is it not our duty to enter into that investigation with an open mind and in the calmest and most even spirit possible? Lord Rosebery told his audience that the inquiry which he desired ought, in his opinion, to be a secret inquiry, and that it should be conducted with calmness. A secret inquiry, in a case of this kind, seems to me to be absolutely out of the question. I do not think that you can consult your own great Departments or chambers of commerce, still less can I bring myself to believe that you can consult your colonies, without the fact being known. And I do think that, if you could conduct your inquiry in secret, and that you were able suddenly to produce the result before the public had had time to consider the matter, your proposals would probably stand a very poor chance of favourable consideration. As to the calmness of the inquiry, I can see no reason whatever why it should not be conducted in the calmest and most judicial spirit, and it is in such a calm and judicial spirit that it will I am sure be considered in your Lordships' House.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: My Lords, I had hoped, when my noble friend rose to address the House, that we might have found that he was ranged upon the side of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I am sorry to find that this is not the case, and that he is deeply imbued with all the heresies, as I think them, of fair trade. The noble Marquess chiefly dwelt, as was no doubt natural on the part of the Foreign Secretary, upon the question of retaliation. He had but little to say in regard to the question of colonial preferences, although that appears to me to be in many respects the most important portion of the question. I will for a few moments deal with the latter part of the noble Marquess's speech in regard to his proposals with reference to retaliation. Those proposals are not new. The noble Marquess spoke as if the state of things which exists at the present time had arisen just now. I believe that that is an entirely erroneous view of the case, and that at all events it is not the view that has been taken by those who for the last twenty or thirty years have advocated the principles of fair trade. My noble friend the noble Duke opposite knows something about the principles of fair trade. If I am not mistaken, he, upon a memorable occasion, annihilated and destroyed the principles of fair trade during one of his elections, and I hope we shall find he still adheres to the principles which then led him to an oratorical triumph. What is the point of the speech of the noble Marquess in regard to this part of the question? It is this, that there has grown up in foreign countries of late years a system of bounties which are found to be injurious to the trade and interests of this country. Well, my Lords, one of the first results of those bounties is that they send the goods of foreign countries, and to a great extent raw material, more cheaply to this country than would otherwise be the case. That we know is so in regard to sugar. When the Sugar Bill reaches this House, if it does reach it, we shall then have an opportunity of discussing that question very fully; but the sugar bounties are bounties mainly given by foreign Governments themselves. The bounties to which the noble Marquess has alluded are bounties given by great trade combinations. The two things rest upon a different basis. I confess that I believe those bounties do not produce mischief to our trade, but render the articles to which they are applied cheaper to us. They produce evil only to their own country.

The noble Marquess says that those bounties may be very well now, but that when they have led to the result that we have been driven out of all the markets of the world, they will be withdrawn and the prices of foreign goods will be raised against us. I should like to know whether the noble Marquess will give us any information as to the present volume of our trade. Has it decreased? Does it show signs of decay? I do not myself believe that it does. One of the first objects of your inquiry, when you have instituted it, must be to find out what is the actual position of our trade at the present time, and how it stands in comparison with our trade in the past. That it is of enormous volume, that it is the greatest trade in the world, no one will dispute. It has been growing for the last fifty years under the fostering influence of free trade, and you now tell us at the end of those fifty years that it is in such a condition that it is threatened with decay. But what we have a right to ask is that you should prove your allegation, and that you should not make it merely upon unsupported evidence. It seems to me, I confess, that this investigation which the noble Marquess says he would like undertaken, I suppose by His Majesty's Government, ought to have been undertaken before the announcement was made by the Colonial Secretary. The noble Marquess has not told us how he is going to conduct his investigation. Is it to be by Royal Commission? I think he did not like the idea of an inquiry by Parliament. Is it, then, to be an inquiry by the Government conducted through the channels of Government Departments? If so, it is an inquiry of a kind that has often been made before, in order that the Government of the day might decide their policy; and such an investigation I venture to submit, in accordance with common sense and with precedent, ought to have been conducted thoroughly and completely by His Majesty's Government before any member of the Government gave expression to opinions of the nature of those with which the Colonial Secretary has recently startled the world.

The noble Marquess, to my infinite astonishment, says that Mr. Chamberlain has no plan. Why, we have had the plan in the fullest details. It is a plan to make food dear; it is a plan to return to protection by a process of retaliation; it is a plan of which everybody understands the meaning, and of which I venture to believe the majority in this country dreads the result. How can the noble Marquess argue that Mr. Chamberlain has no plan? I am sure Mr. Chamberlain would not say so himself. He spoke of "his policy." What is his policy but his plan, and his plan is of a nature so remarkable, so utterly inconsistent with the fiscal principles which have been followed in this country for the last fifty years and which has given us half a century of great industrial and commercial prosperity, that it does naturally startle all those who have heard it, and they have a right to say that it ought not to have been promulgated by a Minister of the Crown without a general concurrence of his colleagues. We know that the Chancellor of the Exchequer absolutely dissents from this plan, that he will have nothing to do with it, and that he adheres to the established fiscal policy of the country. There have, I know, been cases in which Ministers have differed in the same Cabinet upon minor questions, and in some cases they have differed upon questions of great magnitude; but this is, of all questions, the one upon which Ministers of the Crown ought to make up their minds and to speak with united voice, because it goes to the very root of our commercial and industrial prosperity. This question is one which touches every man who is engaged in trade or in commerce, and it is impossible to conceive how a Government can be constitutionally carried on with such deep differences dividing its members. Of course, the Cabinet may differ and keep their differences to themselves for a time, but here you have declared views upon a question which to a commercial country like ours is one of the most vital importance.

The public journals tell us that the Secretary of State for the Colonies is not going to speak any more on this subject in Parliament. They also tell us that he is not to go about the country making speeches until the prorogation. But is he then to go about the country making speeches? Is this investigation, of which we hear so much and upon which so much depends, to be conducted by speeches from a master of the art of speaking on the one hand defending his policy, and by speeches by the Chancellor of the Exchequer the next day condemning and criticising it? That is a state of things which cannot go on, which cannot be allowed to continue. The danger of prolonging this state of uncertainty is very great indeed. This question affects industry and commerce, and affects them in every respect, and the more these disputes are carried on in the face of the country, the more they will unsettle your trade and hamper your industries. Are you going to tie up this question for two or three years after you have discussed it in this way, and then hand it over to a General Election. What will your colonies say? The discussion of this question under the terms in which that discussion will take place will be sure to lead to great dissatisfaction in the colonies. This is a question on which men are divided. There are the strongest opinions on the one side, and there seem to be the strongest opinions on the other side. Is this question to be thrown before the public for discussion for two or three years in the face of your colonies, who ask you to take a particular course? I can conceive no mode of proceeding more calculated to injure British trade itself, and to injure our relations with the colonies than that which it appears His Majesty's Government contemplate pursuing.

What is it that the Colonial Secretary does propose in regard to the colonial part of the question? It is this. He proposes to place a tax, and it must be a considerable tax, or it will not have the effect he desires, upon the food of the people. He does not at present contemplate a tax on raw material. But if you are to deal with your colonies in this matter upon a footing of equality, if you are to benefit the corn of Canada by a tax on foreign corn, you must benefit the wool of Australia by a tax on foreign wool; and that to me, living as I do in a woollen country, is a matter of serious importance indeed. Upon all the bases upon which it is desirable to rest the unity of this Empire, the worst is a tax on the food of the people. There is no basis so dangerous, nothing so likely to produce serious difficulty with the colonies—aye, and possibly to threaten disruption—as the placing of the interests of the great mass of the people in contradiction to the supposed interests of the colonies. If the proposals of the Colonial Secretary were to be accepted—as I earnestly trust they will not be accepted—by the people, and by the Parliament of this country, in a short time they would begin to tell. Dear bread and dear meat would tell their own story, and the great mass of the people of this country, suffering in their food, would undoubtedly turn round and raise a great cry against the policy which had inflicted evils of that kind upon them. The noble Viscount, Lord Goschen, pointed to that, and said—

> "But you will not be able to alter it. You will be bound by agreements or treaties with your colonies, and, however evil the system may turn out to be, you will not be able to change it."

If that is absolutely so, then the result is that the people of the United Kingdom will have lost the control of their own taxation—they will not be able to deal with the taxation of their own country in the mode in which they think best. But there is a greater danger even than that, and it is that in a matter so vital to the interests of the very poorest, the time may come when they will not be restrained by those considerations to which the noble Viscount alluded, and when they will desire to tear your treaties to pieces, and, if the colonies will not agree to it, will proceed without listening to their views. That is the most threatening position in which we could possibly be placed so far as the unity of our Empire is concerned. And yet that is a position to which we may easily be brought if we take a wrong step in this matter. The noble Viscount said that if you take a wrong step you cannot withdraw it, but it must further be considered that you may be forced, in these democratic times, to withdraw it, and that if you do withdraw it you run the greatest risk of the disruption of the Empire. I have always felt, in the course of these discussions, that it was very unfortunate that the term "Zollverein" was applied to Mr. Chamberlain's proposals for preferential arrangements with the colonies. Preferential arrangements have nothing whatever to do with the real idea of a Zollverein. A Zollverein such as existed in Germany, whence comes the name, was an agreement of States among themselves by which there were no internal taxes, and by which equal and common taxes were placed upon the frontiers of all the States, the results being divided equitably. That may be the dream of the future. There is nothing inconsistent with sound principles in the adoption, if it be possible, of a Zollverein of that kind within the British Empire. But that is not the proposal we have before us.

What we have before us now has really nothing to do with a Zollverein. It is a proposal to make special preferential arrangements with our colonies, and the arrangements cannot be made except in regard to food and raw materials. There is nothing else that they send us largely, and it is upon those two matters, the very last matters which ought to be made questions of taxation, that your preferential arrangements must necessarily and inevitably be made. There is really nothing new in these proposals. They are the old proposals of the Fair Trade League. They have been before the public now for a great many years, and it was not supposed that they were likely to receive any support from a responsible Minister in this country. However, it seems that they are to be furbished up again, and, with the help of Sir Howard Vincent and others, the Colonial Secretary is to go through the country advocating the adoption of the arrangement. They have been shown to be threatening in the highest degree to our trade and commerce, because they will not only affect the industries connected with food and raw material, but will ultimately affect every single industry in the country, for, if you cut off your imports from abroad you diminish your exports, and hamper and disorganise your trade. Therefore I sincerely hope that this House and the country will not commit themselves in any way to these proposals. We are told that they are to be matter for inquiry, and that that inquiry is to be fair, but we are not told when and how it is to be made. We are left in a position of having one of the most powerful members of the Cabinet committed to proposals of a most definite and clear kind. It is impossible to deny that the proposals laid down in Mr. Chamberlain's speeches have been definite and clear. It is difficult for Mr. Chamberlain to speak without speaking clearly. He has spoken out without any doubt with regard to the proposals that he wishes to submit to the country, and anybody who has watched the course of that astute statesman will know very well that he will not give up that which he has once proposed, and will pursue his object to the end, in the hope, I suppose that he may catch some vote which will enable him to make this desperate experiment. I hope that day may not come; for I am confident, and I repeat it, that no scheme could have been devised more essentially dangerous to the maintenance of our union with the colonies than a scheme which by taxing the food of our people, and, as I believe, the raw material of our manufacturers, will inevitably raise questions between the mother country and the colonies fraught with the greatest danger.

*THE EARL OF MAYO: My Lords, I hope I may be permitted to address a few words to your Lordships on this subject. I suppose no country in the world is so interested as Ireland when the question of protection is mentioned, because it is needless to say that Ireland, which is entirely a food producing country, would benefit greatly from protection. The political effect of this matter interests us very much in Ireland. Irishmen, as you are aware, are very fond of politics, and it seems to me, looking at the question from the political aspect, that the Radical Party have been provided with a new platform and with a policy. That policy is to try and make out as far as possible that there is division in the Party to which I have the honour to belong. The noble Viscount, who was himself a great Chancellor of the Exchequer, and whose speech we listened to to-night with the greatest admiration, stated that he hoped the Government would deal with this matter with frankness and distinctness. I must say that after listening to the noble Marquess, who spoke from the Government Benches, I did not gather that there was quite that distinctness which I should like to have heard on this matter. The noble Marquess stated that he was willing to collect statistics and go into arguments. I would much rather have heard the noble Marquess say what the Secretary of State for the Colonies said—that this was a matter for conference with the colonies. I had the honour of listening to the Colonial Secretary's speech, and I must say that, far from having it impressed on my mind that any new policy was being promulgated with regard to these duties, I left our gallery in the House of Commons with this feeling in my mind, that the whole matter was one for conference, for argument, and for research. As I have said, any question of protection must have great interest for Ireland, which has suffered more than any part of the country from the policy of free trade. That nobody will deny. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, when he was interrupted by one of the Nationalist Members, drew attention to the fact that Irish Members were always complaining that free trade had ruined their country. From that you might infer that I should at once announce myself a violent protectionist, but I must remember this, that protection, if adopted in a very drastic measure, would affect us in Ireland as well as the working men of this country. To show how a little straw indicates in which way the wind blows, you will remember that the Chancellor of the Exchequer last year, when imposing the tax on corn, was urged by the Members from the country to which I belong to exempt Indian meal, which is largely eaten and used by the poor in the poorest districts of Ireland when the potato crop fails. Therefore we have the curious anomaly that protection would no doubt send up the price of beef and of other food that we produce in Ireland, and yet you have the Irish Members, when there is a little tax put on corn, urging that the tax on Indian meal should be taken off. For that reason I agree that the matter is one that should be duly inquired into, and not only inquired into by means of statistics and arguments, but by a conference with the colonies.

I should like to draw attention to one or two remarks that fell from the noble Marquess, Lord Ripon. He said that the Secretary of State for the Colonies had a plan. I heard the right hon. Gentleman's speech and would remind the noble Marquess that Mr. Chamberlain denied having any plan whatever. He said it was a matter for argument, and he added that he proposed to place the whole matter before the country. The noble Marquess also said at the end of his speech that the Government would take a very wrong step if their policy resulted in dear food and dear bread. I do not imagine that anybody is going to take any step at all without those inquiries that are absolutely necessary, and therefore I hope that the Government will go even further than giving us statistics and adducing arguments, because we might go on arguing for ever. What we want is some definite conference on the subject with the colonies, as foreshadowed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and then we shall know where we are in the matter. My Lords, I have just come out of a conference which has not been without result, and I should like to see this great subject taken in hand by an Imperial conference. We in Ireland feel very interested in this question of protection, and therefore I hope that the subject will be properly gone into by a conference, not only with the colonies, but with men who are well versed in all these affairs.

The Earl of Mayo.

*LORD BRASSEY: My Lords, before going to the root of the matter under discussion, I desire to say that it is with sincere regret that I find myself not in accord with the able Minister under whom for five years I had the honour to serve. Mr. Chamberlain, in his recent speeches, has not attempted to formulate a plan. In general terms he has suggested a scheme for closer Imperial consolidation by more active and advantageous interchange of trade. We are to put duties on food and raw materials for the benefit of the colonies, and to look to the colonies for compensation by some material reduction in their duties on British manufactures. We have to consider whether such a scheme is practicable, and whether, in the interests of Imperial unity, it is necessary. Mr. Chamberlain, in his recent speeches, has suggested that the working people of this country may be compensated for increased cost of living by more constant employment and higher wages. This brings me to my personal experience as an Australian Governor. I deemed it my duty, while in Victoria, to discuss the question with leading Australian statesmen whenever opportunity offered, and more particularly with Sir George Turner, then Premier of the Colony and now Treasurer to the Government of the Commonwealth. The views of Sir George Turner were identical with those more recently expressed by his colleague, Mr. Kingston, if the mother country offered advantages Australia would endeavour to reciprocate. They could not take off duties on imports from the United Kingdom. They might increase the tariff on imports from foreign countries. We can appreciate the conditions with which Colonial Ministers have to deal. They depend to a large degree on Customs for the means of carrying on the Government. In Canada, with a revenue of nearly £10,000,000, no less than 57 per cent. is derived from this source. In the Australian colonies the revenue drawn from Customs is the principal item.

Turning from the official view, in the colony of Victoria, as in Canada, the majority of the industrial population was strongly protectionist. I had many opportunities of learning their views in conversation with Mr. Trenwith, then the leader of the Labour Party in the Legislature, and subsequently a member of the Victorian Ministry. The Labour Party has aimed at setting up manufacturing establishments in every branch for which the local conditions were favourable. Australia being a wool-growing country, the tariff on woollen goods was highly protectionist. The Victorian rate was 45 per cent. Under the Commonwealth it has been reduced to 25 per cent. Cotton goods which were imported free into Victoria, are charged 25 per cent. under the Commonwealth. Such articles as tea and coffee, on which a duty was formerly paid, are now admitted duty free. The fiscal policy of the Australian colonies has not changed in the interests of the mother country since the Government was established on a more democratic basis under the constitution of the Commonwealth. The indications thus far are not hopeful for the acceptance of proposals for extensive remission in Australia of the duties very lately imposed. While their tariff is protectionist, our Australian fellow-subjects are good customers to the mother country. It may almost be said that we have a monopoly—certainly a dominant share in the supply of every article in demand, which we are able to produce. In this regard our position could hardly be improved by any change in our fiscal policy. The change most to be wished is one which lies beyond the control of man—a steadier rainfall and a greater ability to carry population.

At a time when proposals are being made for a Customs union of the whole Empire, it is appropriate to recall the recent experiences of the Australian Commonwealth. The conference of representatives of the several States, by whose labours a constitution for the Australian federation was framed, shrank from the yet more arduous task of adjusting a common tariff. They left the thorny problem to the Federal Parliament. That Parliament included many of the best men from all the federated States. It was animated by a strong desire that the first effort under a united Government should be successful. It found the difficulties almost insurmountable. It was hard to reconcile the conflicting interests of Queensland, a sugar-growing and cattle-raising province; of New South Wales, chiefly interested in the production of wool; of Victoria, with her manufacturing establishments, extensive vineyards, and important dairy industry; of South Australia, a wheat-growing province; and of Western Australia, now the chief producer of gold. Nearly a year was consumed in lengthy debates. The tariff difficulties in Australia are not encouraging for more comprehensive efforts. A round-table conference between the representatives of countries far more widely separated by distance and other conditions might tend rather to political disruption than to closer unity. In the enjoyment of unrestricted self-government in matters of trade, every part of the Empire has flourished. Nor has there been the possibility of acrimonious disputation. Is it the part of the statesman to abandon the policy of mutual freedom and independence to which we have hitherto adhered?

The fiscal policy of Canada does not differ from that of Australia. It was fully explained in the memorandum submitted by the Canadian delegates to the Colonial Conference last year. Reductions have been made, but in a prohibitory tariff. It remains, and is intended to remain, protectionist. The average rate on manufactures from the United Kingdom is still 24 per cent. The rates are lower on raw materials and machinery. In the supply of such articles we cannot compete with the United States. The changes introduced in favour of Great Britain increased our exports to Canada. The advance was inconsiderable, as compared with the increase in Canada's imports in the same period from the United States. There is room in Canada for a large increase of population. It is vain to hope for a proportionate increase in our exportation of manufactured goods from the United Kingdom. The policy of Canada is to give protection to local industries.

The fiscal policy now proposed is attractive to some who think that we fail to keep pace with protectionist countries. A flying survey, in the light of the latest information, will not justify despondency. Take our nearest neighbour. The growth in the value of British trade in the twenty-five years ending 1894, included in Mulhall's work on the industries and wealth of nations, was relatively three times as great as that of France. While the later statistics are more favourable to France, the condition to-day is unprogressive. Capital is leaving that country and seeking investment abroad, and chiefly in the United Kingdom. The progress of Germany has been greater than our own, but until a recent period Germany had been backward. As the Commission on the Depression of Trade pointed out, the Franco-German war had a great effect on commercial activity. The war indemnity gave large supplies of new capital to Germany, and it stimulated consumption and production. Its force seems spent, and now Germany is suffering from that over-production on which the Commission on Trade Depression specially insisted as the cause of the state of things in the United Kingdom, into which they had been directed to inquire. The latest Consular report gives a gloomy picture of many leading trades in Germany, and large numbers are without employment. We cannot make comparisons with the United States. We admire the energy and the skill which the American people have displayed. Large profits have been realised; a vast expansion has taken place. How far have the benefits been shared by the mass of the people? The report of Mr. Bell, British Commercial Agent in the United States, describes the anxieties of the situation. He says—

> "Within the last five years living expenses have increased more than in the previous twenty years. . . . When the reaction comes more will be heard of the questions of trusts and tariffs. . . . Financial authorities are advising caution."

And now let us look at home. Lord Rosebery has recently quoted the statistics of our exports and imports for five years. If we look back some ten years an equal rate of progress has been maintained. We have advanced from an aggregate of £682,000,000 for 1893 to nearly £880,000,000 for 1902. Nor has our trade, as it is shown in the Income Tax returns, been conducted unprofitably. In the opinion of the Commission to which I have already referred, profits are more widely distributed. All the indications point to an improving condition of the people. We have the vast increases in the deposits in the savings banks, the greater consumption of commodities, the remarkable statistics of the friendly societies, the spread of education, and some diminution of pauperism. When we take into view the many channels, not always nor everywhere as open as we could wish, through which our trade passes, that Government would be rash indeed which should venture in any part of the world to put obstacles in the way. The new fiscal policy has been recommended on the ground that the ties of material advantage are necessary to hold the British Empire. Is this the teaching of the latest history? Witness the improved relations between the United Kingdom and the United States, and their common action, lately taken in China and elsewhere. The McKinley tariff, intentionally prohibitory, has been no bar. The same bonds which link the two nations together bind us to our colonies in a yet closer union.

When proposals are made by a powerful Minister in the responsible position of Secretary of State for the Colonies, and having for their aim an object which we all approve, they necessarily claim our most attentive consideration. In words used by Lord Salisbury, the matter is not one for vague sentiment. It is one for hard thinking, and the utmost effort that the strongest intellects of our time can give. It is not necessary to rush to conclusions. The condition of the country, as we know, is not unprosperous. It is easy to appreciate that higher prices in our markets should be desired by colonial producers, but it is difficult to see how they can give us compensation. Their policy is protectionist. Their powers of consumption, under any fiscal policy, of the articles we are able to supply are limited. Meanwhile, is there nothing to be done? We may be more liberal in giving Imperial aid to improve steamship services and the laying of cables; we may seize all opportunities of doing honour to the colonies; we may hold Colonial Conferences. No bond can be greater than the services of a strong and a sympathetic Minister at the Colonial Office.

*THE EARL OF JERSEY: My Lords, at this late hour when your Lordships naturally wish to hear the Leaders of the House my remarks will be very few. Like the noble Lord who has just sat down, I am unable to believe that a system of preferential tariffs could be beneficial to this country, or, in the long run, to Australia. The noble Marquess the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs referred to the threatening action of Germany, and stated that that country would put us upon the least-favoured-nation clause if we gave preference to our colonies. There is no doubt whatever that if the German authorities were to decide to act in that manner it would be so hostile to this country that we should be called upon to consider our position in regard to Germany altogether. The noble Marquess left out of consideration the question of the increase in the price of food in this country, and yet it is upon that that the Colonial Secretary based his policy. I allow that that is not his main object. It is only fair to say that his desire is to use that pivot in order to bring together the different parts of the Empire. Certainly to solidify the Empire is an object worthy of any statesman, but at the same time it is most essential that in endeavouring to draw outlying parts of the Empire together we should do nothing to weaken in any way the heart of the Empire itself. It is upon this question of the increase in the price of food that this matter will be mainly settled. The value of foreign imports into Australia and New Zealand is about £14,000,000 a year, and into Canada about £29,000,000. A part of that £29,000,000 must naturally be for goods which under all circumstances would come from the United States of America, and one cannot believe that it would be either wise or natural for Australasia to entirely cut off connection with other parts of the world. Therefore, we have only offered to us a portion of what I may call this extra trade, and in order to obtain this portion we are to be offered a lower tariff than foreign countries, but nothing like free imports. Surely we ought to pause well before we decide to adopt such a course. We do not blame the colonies. Their policy is entirely one of protection; and what does a protected country desire? It does not desire the import of foreign goods; it will accept those goods for a time, until such time as their own manufactures can supersede them. When their own manufactures have been built up, then the door will be shut against foreign goods. Therefore, we are asked in this country to change our world-wide system of commerce, to impose a great tax upon our people, in order to get, perhaps, for a time a share of those millions to which I have referred. Though I am as anxious as any man to see the trade of the colonies develop, it does not seem to me that Great Britain would be justified in running such a risk. After all, in every country where you have a protective tariff the amount of protection will be a constant source of discussion. Therefore, what is given to-day may be reduced or taken away to-morrow; and where should we be if, after having altered our system with regard to other countries, we found that the doors of our colonies were shut against us, and where, also, should we be supposing parties in the colonies were to be divided on the question of whether or not they would give us a good rebate.

There are other questions which affect free trade besides those of hostile tariffs. You may depend upon it that there is much in the complaints of our Consuls as regards the neglect of our manufacturers to meet the wishes of foreign customers, in the erluctance of workmen at home to make use of the labour-saving appliances which are in vogue in the United States and elsewhere, and in the action of trades unions which will not allow, even within the limit of reasonable hours, either the men or the machines they work, to be used to the full advantage. These are amongst the causes which have hindered the development of our trade, and unless they are altered we may be quite sure that British trade will run the risk of going back. I do not think that we shall get sufficient advantage by so altering the present fiscal arrangements as to add to the burdens of the people, and also to the cost of our manufactures; it would be a strange thing if in this country, whose foreign trade depends upon cheap production, we were to take a step which must inevitably add to the initial cost of manufacture. It would have been far better if we had

had the inquiry before the policy was foreshadowed. If this inquiry is to be one which is to be carried out upon public platforms and in heated speeches, we may feel quite sure that the great principle which lies, as I believe, at the root of the Colonial Secretary's policy will be dropped out, and we shall simply fall back into the discussion of whether we support free trade or protection. I am reminded of an anecdote of a curate who was having breakfast with his bishop. The bishop noticed that the curate was only toying with his egg. He said to him, "I think you have not a very good egg there," and the curate answered, "My Lord, parts of it are excellent." So the Imperial flavour is excellent, but the taste of protection disagreeable.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Lord BALFOUR of BURLEIGH): My Lords, I shall endeavour not to detain the House for many minutes. But it would, perhaps, be inappropriate if some one else from this bench besides the noble Marquess who has spoken, and the noble Duke the Leader of the House were not to express his views upon the important subjects which have been under discussion to-night. We have listened to many interesting speeches, and I, for one, am not disposed to complain of the tone or the spirit in which, at any rate, the great majority of them have been composed. Least of all will I complain of the tone and temper of the very able speech with which Lord Goschen introduced the discussion to-night. If he felt difficulty, how much more must I feel it, that it is not possible, in the course of a single speech, to take up and deal with all the wide range of subjects which might be held not to be inappropriate to the notice which appears on the Paper of your Lordships' House, covering, as it must do, many important points, not only of fiscal policy, but points of foreign policy and of colonial policy as well. I myself have no hesitation in saying that I adhere to the general principles which are understood to be comprised in the free trade policy of this country. But when I have said so much I am inclined to ask, What is free trade? I sometimes think that a definition is necessary in these days. I do not know whether the definition which I shall attempt to give—it is not a new one—will satisfy noble Lords opposite, but it is good enough for me. It is that free trade is a free interchange of commodities at their natural price. When this policy became the adopted policy of the country, its universal adoption was prophesied. I venture to say that the circumstances in which we find ourselves to-day are not the same as the circumstances in which the country was placed half a century ago. At any rate, after half a century of the adoption of the policy of free trade by this country, we find ourselves in almost isolated adherence to its principles. But there can be no doubt of this, that our adherence to its principles has brought us great advantages. Not only through it do we get food as cheaply as possible, but we have the free entry of every sort of raw material for manufacture. If that fact stood alone, I certainly am not surprised that a very grave consideration should be demanded before anyone would be warranted in asking the country to give up those great advantages which I have indicated.

But, my Lords, I am bound also in fairness to say that those who are dissatisfied with the present position of affairs can point to considerations which it seems to me are well worthy of examination and consideration, even by the most ardent advocates of the policy of free trade in the abstract. We have had built round us a wall of hostile tariffs, erected everywhere against our trade. On the other hand, we are able now, as one of the points of consideration, to refer to declarations of important colonial statesmen, and I myself desire to retain absolute freedom for this country to resist any attempt on the part of foreign countries to differentiate between us and our colonies in any matters of the free interchange of commodities between us. Under all these circumstances the Secretary of State for the Colonies has put forward certain suggestions. He has more or less definitely indicated the views which he holds. But, my Lords, I altogether demur to the confident assertions of some noble Lords opposite that he has put forward a definite plan to which he is going to adhere, under all considerations, or under all circumstances. He has avowedly put forward these suggestions for discussion, and he has himself stated that his object is to have them discussed as calmly as possible. He has not committed himself, as I understand it, to a scheme any more than this, that he has made suggestions which he thinks will stand the test of examination and inquiry. It was said on high authority not many years ago that "Nowadays we are all Socialists." I think I may say that in these days we are all Colonial Federationists. Some began soon, some began later, but I do not think there are many in public life now in this country who are not avowedly desirous of doing all they can to unite by every possible bond, and to show every possible consideration to the great self-governing communities with which we are proud to be connected by ties of blood in every part of the world.

I for one, at any rate, cannot forget the record of that colleague who puts forward these suggestions. I certainly do not undervalue the weight of his authority, or the obligations under which he has placed his colleagues and, in my opinion at any rate, the country at large. Nor shall I undervalue the unique experience which he possesses alike of the feeling of our colonies or of their relations to us, and their desire to draw those relationships closer. But I think I am entitled to say that some noble Lords who have spoken, and others who have taken part in discussion elsewhere, are inclined to press, to a most undue extent, the doctrine of what is called the collective responsibility of those who happen to be associated in the Government. I will admit our collective responsibility as frankly as anyone for our executive conduct, for the legislative measures which we propose to Parliament and for any policy which is formally announced upon Government authority, but I altogether demur to the doctrine apparently held by some that this collective responsibility is to include responsibility for every word and every line in every speech which is delivered by any of our colleagues. I venture to say that is extending it to such a degree as would add a new terror to public life, and one which we are not likely calmly to submit to. Nor do I admit, so far as I am myself concerned, that absolute uniformity of opinion is necessary, nor that we are all to think alike on every matter, whether those matters are for the moment matters of practical issue and practical politics.

I stand here and say that, so far as I know, there is no division amongst us as to anything which at this moment we are resolved to do, and I think I may fairly say to those who agree with me upon the general points I have laid down, and even those who disagree with me, that surely there is a case for examination and inquiry. I think those who object to this examination may well be asked, "Have you confidence in your case? If not, if you have no confidence in the principles to which you express adherence, then I for one can understand the reluctance to bring them to the test of careful examination and inquiry. But if you believe in your case, surely a fair and honest examination of the basis on which it stands, of the facts on which it must depend, must be a welcome course and one which in the end must strengthen the case in which you believe." It is upon that ground in the main that I am willing that the examination and inquiry to which we are committed should take place. But I feel bound to say that as matters now stand, and having regard to all the circumstances in which we find ourselves, I am not prepared to oppose inquiry into the principle upon which our fiscal system is founded. On the contrary, as I have said, I welcome the fullest inquiry, but I do lay down these conditions—that it is to be an examination of facts and circumstances by us as a Government, for our own information, and that we retain to the full our responsibility for any policy which we may hereafter propose to Parliament or to the country as the result of such information as we shall obtain. I will only add that, speaking for myself, as I am entitled to do, I feel bound to say that I have little or no expectation that the inquiry I indicate will show it to be either practical or desirable, in the interest of the nation, to reverse the principles upon which our fiscal policy has been based.

*EARL SPENCER: My Lords, this interesting debate is now drawing to a close, and I feel it is my duty to address some remarks to your Lordships upon the great question that has been brought before us, and also upon the speeches which have been made. First of all I would add my tribute to the eloquent and able speech of the noble Viscount who introduced this subject. There was nobody more competent than Lord Goschen to speak with authority on this great question, for there are few people who have held with greater distinction the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer in this country. He has spoken with great force and ability; and I may add that it is remarkable that, of the three Chancellors of the Exchequer who have held office under the present Government, all take the view which the noble Viscount has taken to-night. I notice a remarkable thing in this debate. Your Lordships' House is not usually reckoned to be a very Liberal Assembly in politics. It is not considered to be full of noble Lords who advocate free trade. It is supposed that, as we are a House of landlords there are more Members of it who are in favour of protection than of free trade. And yet to-night we find that, of those who have spoken from both sides of the House, I think I can only name two who have spoken in the sense of protection. I deeply regret to think that my old political friend the Foreign Secretary may be classed among those; and I think another friend of mine who comes from a country which I know full well, Lord Mayo, may also be classed as belonging to the same doctrine. But except those two noble Lords there has not been a single Member of your Lordships' House who has spoken to-night, who has not professed himself a free trader.

When we are discussing this question we cannot help referring to the repeal of the corn duty. What is the meaning of that? If we are to have preferential duties it is necessary to impose duties on importations from foreign countries, which do not now exist. Canada has made the first claim in this respect, and in order to deal with Canada you must have import duties on corn. How is it, then, that it has now been repealed? I cannot help, as a free trader, congratulating myself on the fact; for if those who advocate this new fiscal policy, so prominently put forward by the Colonial Secretary, had been in the majority in the Cabinet, they would not have thrown away this stepping-stone to preferential tariffs, this method of giving to Canada the very thing she wanted. Depend upon it, a bird in the hand is better than two in the bush, and if those who advocated this policy had been in a majority in the Cabinet, I cannot help thinking that the tax on corn would have been continued and not repealed. I cannot for a moment believe, what some people say, that the duty has been repealed in order that at a date not yet named it may be put on in greater severity. There is another thing with regard to the corn duty which I think is worth considering in regard to other duties. This duty was put on as a fiscal and not as a protective duty. And yet now we are told on the highest authority, that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer who put it on, that in some respects, especially on flour, it had been a protective duty. There is another matter which is also significant. It was not intended, and it was never expected, that the corn duty would increase the price of the poor man's bread. And yet now we hear from the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself that that has been the case. People are apt to forget another matter, too, that, even if the price of bread has not been raised—there is evidence that it has been raised—if the duty had not been there they would have got their bread at a much cheaper rate. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No."] I say so deliberately; and I cannot for a moment believe that if you put a tax on an article the price of that article is not raised. I will not dwell more upon this point except to say that I think I may congratulate free traders that there are in another place apparently only twenty-eight members who absolutely and openly profess protection.

We are told that we are to have an inquiry. What has taken place in regard to this matter? Within the last few years there have been no fewer than four conferences on this subject. There was the conference over which Lord Knutsford presided in 1887; two conferences presided over by the present Colonial Secretary, to whose ability I wish to give testimony, though I differ entirely from him on this point; and there was the conference at Ottawa, where my noble friend who spoke but very lately, Lord Jersey, presided. And I cannot help congratulating this House that the grandson of one of the statesmen to whom we owe all the blessings of free trade should have spoken in this House to-night, and have advocated the principles which his great ancestor introduced first into Parliament. What did we learn from those conferences? First of all we learned, what we rejoiced in, that there is a great desire on the part of the colonies to come into closer connection and greater amity with the mother country. We all desire that. We next found that any arrangement with the colonies on a basis of free trade would be impossible. And the next point we found was that whatever arrangement we made the complications would be so enormous that it would be almost impossible to have a satisfactory basis for an agreement with the mother country for preferential treatment. These points are, I think, clearly established by the conferences that have taken place. I venture to think the difficulties between the colonies are so great, and the interests of the various colonies and the mother country are so great, that if we try to introduce a common Zollverein between them, instead of drawing the colonies into greater amity and concord we are much more likely to excite dissension and differences. If we consider for a moment how our colonies are placed, how different are the conditions — climatic, commercial and material—between the various colonies, and the enormous distance they are from the mother country and from each other, we shall not be surprised that there should be different desires and different policies with regard to fiscal matters in the various colonies.

This country has very wisely allowed the colonies to have a perfectly free hand with regard to their fiscal relations. We certainly followed a wise policy in regard to that. But these difficulties seem to me to be so great that the effect on the colonies will be almost, I should say, disastrous. Even if at first we could come to some agreement, before this arrangement had been in existence many years I fear it would lead to discord and confusion rather than to an increase of amity with this country. I see my noble friend the Secretary for Foreign Affairs is now in his place. When I referred to him just now I did not observe he was not there. I think the speech of the noble Marquess opens up a very great consideration. The proposals that have been made by the Colonial Secretary point directly to preferential duties in favour of the colonies, coupled with old-age pensions; and he directly says that, in order to do this, he does not wish to impose taxation on anything but food. Now, if you are to have an increase of taxation, I cannot help thinking that the very worst tax that you can possibly introduce is that which taxes the food of the people. But that is the long and the short of the proposals of the Colonial Secretary. The noble Viscount very properly showed that, besides this, there was the point of retaliation on foreign countries on manufactured articles, and there were various other points which were sure to follow if this one step in the direction of the Colonial Secretary's proposal were followed.

But the noble Marquess entered into an entirely new subject. We heard some time ago—I think it was last year—a good deal with regard to the bounties on sugar. Many of us doubted extremely, and many of us still doubt extremely, the wisdom of that policy. We said: "Is the Government going into a war against bounties generally? This is the beginning of it; the thin end of the wedge." We were at once scouted for having said it. But the fiscal policy of the noble Marquess is to deal with the whole of this great subject. It is quite distinct, as far as I can see—I may be wrong, but I think I am right—from the policy which has been propounded by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The noble Marquess pointed out what has been done by means of trusts on the Continent, one country going beyond its own boundaries in order to establish a great trust by means of which the countries which have joined it may be able to export certain articles of manufacture or commerce at lower rates than those at which the articles are sold in their own country. I think that is what the noble Marquess said. What has been the result of that? The noble Marquess says it has affected immensely several industries in this country. I rather think he mentioned the spirit industry. He certainly named rails and also iron plates. He says the effect of these trusts dealing with these matters has been to introduce into this country an enormous quantity of goods at a rate which would be destructive to those who deal in those goods in our country. He does not prove that. Are those industries at such a very low ebb? Are they running down hill to destruction? And what is the policy which he professes? Why, it is nothing more nor less than pure protection; it is protection of these industries. And the noble Lord must remember that we never should adopt such a policy ourselves. In my opinion, it is very doubtful whether we ought to interfere with other countries in such matters, particularly when they provide for large manufactures in this country an enormous quantity of goods at a very cheap rate. I imagine that the noble Marquess would deal with this question by protective duties on many articles of manufacture. That is retaliation, and retaliation is one of the very worst features of protection. I lament, indeed, to find the noble Marquess advocating that.

In these discussions we often hear allusion made to preferential duties and retaliation as if preferential duties had never been given to our colonies in former days, and as if retaliation had never been exercised in this country. Preferential duties were in vogue for a great number of years. They were not repealed or altered quite as soon, if I remember correctly, as the reform of the tariff, but very soon after Sir Robert Peel had reformed the tariff—I think it was Mr. Gladstone himself who did away with preferential duties. They were a signal failure. Then, in regard to retaliation, we have often and often in the past tried it. Sir R. Peel, speaking in the House of Commons on January 27, 1846, in explanation of his scheme for taking off an enormous quantity of duties from the tariff, said—

> "Now let me conclude with two observations; one connected with our foreign policy and the interests of our commercial intercourse with foreign countries, and the other having reference to our own domestic circumstances. I fairly avow to you that in making this great reduction upon the import of articles, the produce and manufacture of foreign countries, I have no guarantee to give you that other countries will immediately follow our example. I give you that advantage in the argument. Wearied with our long and unavailing efforts to enter into satisfactory commercial treaties with other nations we have resolved at length to consult our own interests, and not to punish those other countries for the wrong they do us in continuing their high duties upon the importation of our products and manufactures, by continuing high duties ourselves, encouraging unlawful trade. . . . It is a fact that other countries have not followed our example, and have levied higher duties in some cases upon our goods. But what has been the result upon the amount of your exports? You have defied the regulations of these countries, your export trade is greatly increased. . . . But your exports, whatever be the tariffs of other countries, or however apparent the ingratitude with which they have treated you—your export trade has been constantly increasing."

The same thing may be said now. I say those are significant words from the great man who introduced this policy of free trade. The policy of retaliation was known and had been tried in his time, and was found absolutely wanting. In another passage Sir R. Peel says:

> "The best way to compete with hostile tariffs is by free imports."

I regret to think that we are now about, not only to fight this question of preferential tariffs in regard to the colonies, but also to fight protection, because that seems to be the policy of the noble Marquess, though I do not know whether it is the policy of the Government. I for one, and certainly I believe all those with whom I am connected, will do our utmost to oppose that which we believe will be a most pernicious policy. It may not blow up the rock on which the great commercial edifice of the country is built, but I believe it will undermine that edifice, and in that way will be a terrible blow to the prosperity of our people and the success of our commerce. What is the position of the Government? Here is the second greatest Minister in the Cabinet propounding a policy, and saying this is what he is determined or desirous to lay before the constituencies.

After reading the telegram already published from Sir H. Rawson, Governor of New South Wales, to Mr. Chamberlain, in which the expression occurs, "the declaration of the British Government," ask, Did that telegram, referring to the policy of His Majesty's Government, emanate in the first instance from Sir H. Rawson without any communication from the Government? If the noble Duke says so I shall withdraw any imputation; but it seems to me that the telegram clearly shows that Mr. Chamberlain, in his communications with the Governors, has stated that his

Majesty's Government are intending to put forward this policy as that of the Government. How about the other members of the Cabinet? The noble Lord who spoke last said, referring to the collective responsibility of Ministers, that it was impossible that all the members of the Government could be unanimous. I entirely agree. But a great deal depends upon the subject. If the subject is the foundation of our fiscal policy, surely it is impossible for a Minister of the Crown of the importance of the Colonial Secretary to go to the country and say this was his policy, without the country thinking that it was also the policy of the Government. The collective responsibility of the Government is imperative in all matters of importance. The people expect that of every Government. They do not agree that a Government might have four or five voices on a great question—and what question could be greater than this?—but they expect that the Government should speak with firmness and unanimity. I appeal to the noble Duke the Leader of the House to explain his position with respect to this policy. I remember that my noble friend, as a candidate for the House of Commons, fought a severe contest with a fair trader. I have here an extract from a speech he delivered in November, 1885, and I hope he will now repeat the sentiments to which he gave expression on that occasion. He said—

> "A Liberal majority would also mean the accession to power of a Government which is determined to adhere without flinching to the principles of that free trade which has already done so much for the prosperity of the country, and to which Lancashire and the North of England owe all their pre-eminence, industrial and commercial."

Does the noble Duke now belong to a Government which adheres without flinching to free trade principles? Certainly it was evident that many distinguished members of the Government have a strong leaning—if nothing more — towards the principles of protection which in the past did so much harm to the country. There is to be an inquiry. What is the inquiry to be into? Have not the principles of free trade and protection been discussed up hill and down dale all over the country for years past? And what is to be the nature of the inquiry? Is it to be a Royal Commission, or a Committee of one House, or a united Committee of both Houses? We, of course, know that a great question of this sort cannot be settled without full inquiry; but we believe the Cabinet, which is responsible for the raising of this question, should inquire into it themselves, and come to a decision on it. We have a right to ask for information on the subject of this inquiry; and we have the further right to ask that there should be no unnecessary delay in submitting this great question to the only tribunal which can give a final judgment upon it—namely, the constituencies. I feel that this matter is of such gigantic importance to the political interests, to the commercial interests — nay, to every interest of the country and the colonies—that any uncertainty about it will paralyse trade and commerce. Therefore, we have a right to demand information about this inquiry, and that the inquiry should not be delayed.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Duke of DEVONSHIRE): My Lords, I do not think that I need at any length follow the arguments of the noble Earl. I think that in the greater part of his speech he has travelled somewhat beyond the scope of the question which is raised in the Motion of my noble friend behind me. I think the noble Earl during the greater part of his speech entered somewhat into that extremely large and wide field of inquiry and discussion to which we are invited by the Colonial Secretary, and which has been approved and sanctioned by the Cabinet as a whole. I do not understand that it was the intention of my noble friend behind me to ask the House to-night to discuss all the subjects which are involved in the proposed inquiry. I understood him rather to ask what were the conditions and main points which ought to be held in view in any inquiry of that sort; but I did not understand from his speech that he desired us to enter into the merits of the question. There was one point in the speech of the noble Earl to which I ought to give an immediate answer. The noble Earl referred to a telegram which was sent the other day by the Governor of New South Wales, and which has been published. The noble Earl does not seem to be aware that that telegram has already been the subject of a question and answer in the other House of Parliament.†

*EARL SPENCER: I was quite aware of that.

THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE: Well, the noble Earl has asked whether that telegram was prompted by the Government. The answer given by the Prime Minister, when a question was put to him on the subject, was—

> "I do not know what declaration the Governor of New South Wales refers to in this statement."

The Minister for the Colonies was sitting by his side, and I think that answer could hardly have been a consistent, although it might have been verbally accurate, or an ingenuous answer if the Secretary of State for the Colonies had been any party to the sending of such a telegram.

*EARL SPENCER: Then it was a misapprehension of Sir H. Rawson that this was the policy of the Government?

THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE: The Question which the noble Earl, as I understood him, asked, was whether that telegram was prompted by the Government. I should have gathered from the answers given in the other House of Parliament that it was quite obvious that the telegram was not prompted by the Government; but since the noble Earl referred to the subject a few minutes ago, I have received from a representative of the Colonial Office, who happens to be present here to-night, an assurance that the telegram from Sir H. Rawson was entirely spontaneous on the part of the Governor of New South Wales. Coming to the speech of my noble friend Viscount Goschen—we are too old friends to make it in the least necessary for us to bandy any compliments; but I hope he will allow me to say that I heard him with the greatest satisfaction, and that I think he has done a very great service in placing before us so clearly some of the main issues that have to be considered on the great and momentous question that has been so recently raised. This House is grateful to him for having given it an opportunity of listening to the treatment dispassionately, of a question of momentous interest at a period when our discussion may have some effect upon the opinions of the country. Too often questions are discussed at almost unnecessary length in the other House of Parliament, and only come to us when they have been practically decided and when any discussion in this House can no longer have very much bearing on the result. The Motion of my noble friend to-night has given the House an opportunity of even anticipating discussion in the other House of Parliament. Although the subject has been incidentally raised in the other House, the rules of its proceedings have prevented it being so fully and adequately discussed as it has been possible to discuss it in the House of Lords. I need not add to the tribute that has been paid to the speech of my noble friend for the admirable tone and calmness of temper with which he introduced the subject, thus setting an example which will be invaluable when a subject of such vast importance and exciting so much controversy is discussed. I can assure the House that that is the tone in which the Government desire that it should be discussed.

The Colonial Secretary, in the first speech in which he raised the discussion, said that the time had not come when it could be settled, and what he desired was that discussion should be opened. Exactly the same language has been held by those who take a different view of the question from the Colonial Secretary, and who have also expressed their willingness that there should be a fair and full discussion and examination of the question. I cannot see how any man, any convinced and rational free-trader, can take exception to either inquiry or discussion on this subject. In the first place, there is no free-trader who can feel, or profess to feel, satisfied with the present position of the question. What the free trader advocates is free interchange of all commodities between all nations. What we have got—whatever he may think of the advantages to be obtained from what we have got—is something very different from that. What we have got is free imports on one side and exports burdened by every barrier fiscal ingenuity can devise. And I cannot see how any convinced free-trader can object to an inquiry after the lapse of a period of fifty years into the reasons which have prevented the realisation of the hopes which were entertained by the founders of this policy, and an inquiry whether it may not be possible that anything should be done in order to secure the more ample and full realisation of that policy which was undoubtedly in the minds of the founders of free trade policy—Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Cobden, and Mr. Bright.

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† See page 650.

The name of free-traders cannot with strict accuracy be applied to the supporters of our present fiscal system. We are not free-traders, because we have not got free trade. What we are—it is not a very elegant appellation, but it is more accurate to say that we are free importers. I acknowledge that I have been a free importer during the whole of my political life, and I am now. I was in favour of that policy for the first twenty-five years of my career in the House of Commons, for the simple reason that, so far as I knew, no one was anything else. Then came a period of commercial depression, and the agitation, which has been more than once referred to to-night, in those days went by the name of fair trade. The noble Lord opposite was perfectly accurate when he said I was somewhat closely connected with that controversy. It happened that my opponent in a division of Lancashire was the President of the Fair Trade League. I think it is also perfectly accurate to state that, with the help of my friends—including, I think, the valuable assistance of the present Colonial Secretary—I absolutely annihilated and demolished my opponent and his doctrines. I opposed that movement to the best of my ability, partly because I considered that it was not supported by any strong or sound economical opinion, and partly because, after giving the best consideration that I could to the facts and arguments and figures which were brought forward by the advocates of fair trade in support of their contentions, I came to the conclusion that they had failed to establish their case. I am not ashamed to acknowledge that up to the present time, after a lapse of eighteen years, I have yet seen or heard nothing which has induced me, as at present advised, to suppose that at that time I came to a wrong conclusion. But, my Lords, I admit—I am forced to admit—that a great deal has happened, not only during the fifty years our system of free imports has been in force, but even during the last eighteen years, the period since the subject was seriously discussed—a great deal has happened which, I think, is deserving of our most careful and deliberate consideration. Let me refer to one or two of the important changes and events which have taken place in that period. What has happened is that, except to a very partial extent in our own colonies, no progress whatever has been made in any part of the world in the direction of real free trade. What has happened has been that foreign countries have not lowered or relaxed the barriers they have set up against our imports. They have raised and strengthened them.

* EARL SPENCER dissented.

THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE: Certainly they have raised them.

* EARL SPENCER: They are very much lower than in the days of Sir Robert Peel.

THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE: Has the McKinley tariff lowered the duties against us in the United States? Is the German tariff lower than it was during the fair trade agitation? It is the fact that, so far from lowering or relaxing the barriers they have raised against our trade, they have, generally speaking, I will not say in every case, strengthened and raised them. It is alleged, I do not say whether truly or not, that some of our staple industries have suffered, are suffering, and are still more in the future seriously threatened by the tariffs which have been raised against them. Another thing which has happened in this period to which I am referring has been that, whereas for a very long period we were easily supreme in manufacturing industries of all descriptions, supreme in textile manufactures, in the iron and steel, the machinery, and other branches of industry, our supremacy has been challenged, and in some cases I believe successfully challenged. I am not saying that this challenge to our manufacturing supremacy is a result of our colonies. But all these, in my judgment, are inferior in importance, and ought to be undertaken subsequently to, and are dependent on, the fundamental question to which I have referred—that of the economical effect on our own people and our own trade. In my judgment there is not much need for inquiry into political advantages. It is not mainly or primarily as a political arrangement that these changes are proposed to us. They are proposed to us as being expedient in themselves, independently of any political advantages by which they may be accompanied. If they are expedient in themselves—that is to say, if we have all been, up to the present time, wrong in our political economy, if we have made a mistake—which I admit further inquiry as to the results of our policy may prove to be the case—if these proposed changes are economically sound, then there is no question that they will be politically expedient. On the other hand, if these political advantages — I admit they are great — can only be purchased at the expense of privation, hardship, and discontent on the part of our own people, then I say I can conceive no policy which would more certainly or more swiftly tend to the dissolution and disintegration of our Empire.

My Lords, in what I have said I have not attempted so far, to discriminate between two branches of the policy which has been suggested to us—I mean preferential trade with the colonies and retaliation—I do not like the word—as regards other nations. Now, my Lords, the considerations to which I have referred apply to both of these, though not with equal force. I do not think that either of these policies ought to be adopted unless it can be shown in the first instance that they are, or are likely to be, economically sound. But I do not for a moment compare in importance the results which might follow in each case. The policy of preferential treatment of our colonies founded on the taxation of food would be a policy which would be either irrevocable or, if reversed, the reversal must be attended with the most serious and grave consequences. On the other hand, I can conceive that an experiment in the direction of retaliation might be tried, and, if found not to succeed, that it might be reversed without any serious injury to any great national interests.

Now I come to the question how it is proposed this inquiry should be conducted. As far as the Government is concerned any inquiry they undertake must be undertaken by themselves. It is an inquiry they will have to undertake by themselves with the expert assistance of the various Departments of the Government. I believe that most of the materials—indeed all the materials—for such an inquiry and discussion already exist, and a careful examination and exposition of those materials, aided by experts, would place every one of us in a position to grasp the main features of the question. I entirely agree with what was said the other day by Lord Rosebery, and reiterated to-night, that the burden of proof rests upon those who proposed this change in our fiscal policy; and I have not the smallest doubt that that view is also shared by the statesman who proposed that change—Mr. Chamberlain himself. Indeed, that is the course which the inquiry and discussion has already taken. Mr. Chamberlain has opened his case. It remains for him to support it by the arguments and facts which led him to form his conclusions. Ultimately it will be for Parliament and the people to determine whether the facts and the arguments which he may bring forward do substantiate the case which is already opened. I believe every one is agreed—the supporters as well as the opponents of free imports—that no possible harm can result from an inquiry; and the only charge which has been made against us is as to the manner in which the question has been raised for the consideration of the country.

I wish those who think we are open to blame for the manner in which we have raised this discussion to consider what alternatives were open to us. The question has been raised for the consideration of his colleagues and the country by the Minister who is responsible for our colonial relations. Were his colleagues to refuse to entertain his proposals, either by way of action or by way of discussion or inquiry? We were not prepared to entertain those proposals by way of any immediate action. We were all agreed that there was a case for inquiry. The only question that remains is what the nature of that inquiry should be, whether it should be one conducted in secrecy within the four walls of the Cabinet room, or whether it should be an inquiry or discussion openly carried on before the public. We might have undertaken a secret inquiry. Its result must have been positive or negative. If the result of the inquiry was positive, definite proposals would have been made by the Government, or by a reconstructed Government, or if the result were negative, the question would have been raised for the consideration of the country by a statesman in opposition. In either case this question, the magnitude and importance of which is admitted and cannot be ignored, would have to be submitted to an unprepared Party and the unprepared constituencies. It has been pointed out by the Prime Minister that the course which is supposed to be the preferable one, the secret Cabinet inquiry, has been twice already tried on momentous occasions by two great statesmen—in the first case by Sir Robert Peel in 1845, who carried his policy, but destroyed his Party; and in the second case by Mr. Gladstone in 1886, who destroyed his Party, but did not carry his policy. Judging by the result of the experience which is within the recollection of every one of us, I doubt whether any of Mr. Gladstone's colleagues who are sitting opposite me would disagree with me in saying that Mr. Gladstone might have been better advised if, instead of taking the course he did take, he had before the general election of 1885 taken both his colleagues and the country into his confidence and submitted to them the nature of his proposals with regard to the government of Ireland. I do not say for a moment that his policy would have succeeded; but he would have avoided that complete destruction and disruption of his Party from which it has been suffering ever since.

It is said that open questions of this magnitude within the Cabinet are inconsistent with any idea of true Cabinet responsibility; that it is inconsistent with Ministerial responsibility that Ministers should differ on subjects of great and vital importance. In recent times the number of open questions upon which an immediate or early decision is required is more restricted than at some former periods; but I do not think that ever until the present occasion has it been held that there is anything inconsistent with due Ministerial responsibility on an open question regarding policy upon which there is no question of taking any immediate action. The constitutional doctrine of Ministerial responsibility in the matter of open questions was laid down—some time ago, I admit, but I do not know that anybody has questioned his authority—in a speech by the late Lord Macaulay in the House of Commons. He set down his views in favour of allowing complete freedom of action and opinion of members of the Cabinet, and he supported his position by precedent drawn from the Administration of Mr. Pitt. Lord Macaulay said—

> "Let gentlemen run their minds over the history of Mr. Pitt's Administration. . . . Excepting on such Motions brought forward as attacks on Government, perfect liberty was allowed to his colleagues, and that not merely on trifles, but on constitutional questions of vital importance. The question of Parliamentary reform was left open; Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas were in favour of it, Lord Mulgrave and Lord Grenville against it. On the impeachment of Warren Hastings, likewise, the different members of Government were left to pursue their own course. . . . The important question respecting the powers of juries in cases of libel was left open; Mr. Pitt took a view favourable to granting them extensive powers, Lord Grenville and Lord Thurlow opposed him. The abolition of the slave trade was also an open question. Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville were favourable to it; Mr. Dundas and Lord Thurlow were among the most conspicuous defenders of the slave trade. All these instances had occurred in the space of about five years. Were they not sufficient to prove how absurdly and ignorantly those persons spoke who told us that the practice of open questions was a mere innovation of our own time? There were men now living—great men, held in honour and reverence—Lord Grey, Lord Wellesley, Lord Holland, and others, who well remembered that at an early period of their public life the law of libel, the slave trade, Parliamentary reform, were all open questions, supported by one section of the Cabinet and opposed by another. Was this the effect of any extraordinary weakness or timidity on the part of the statesman then Prime Minister? No; Mr. Pitt was a man who even his enemies and detractors always acknowledged possessed a manly, brave, and commanding spirit. And was the effect of his policy to enfeeble his Administration, to daunt its adherents, to

render them unable to withstand the attacks of the Opposition? On the contrary, never did a Ministry present a firmer or more serried front to opposition, nor had he the slightest doubt but that their strength was increased in consequence of giving each member more individual liberty."

I do not think that the defence of leaving open questions of great constitutional importance, always provided they are not ripe for immediate and instant action, is altogether inapplicable to the question now before us. I fully admit the position is in many respects a difficult one. The noble Earl has challenged me to say whether I think the position of the Government is a possible one. I admit it is difficult; but I say it is not an impossible one. When we are told that the position of the Government at the present time is an impossible one, what does it mean? It means that after a declaration has been made by a Minister somebody ought to have resigned.

My Lords, I want to know who ought to have resigned. Ought the Prime Minister to have resigned because Mr. Chamberlain had invited discussion on a policy he had set forth, as to which the Prime Minister had not formed final conclusions—a policy as to which it was quite possible that on further examination he might find himself either wholly or in part in agreement? The position of the Prime Minister, if he had resigned as soon as that speech was made, and on further reflection found he agreed with it, would have been a most absurd one. Then, should Mr. Chamberlain resign? Why should Mr. Chamberlain resign when he found that his colleagues, though they frankly avowed their present frame of mind, were willing to give an opportunity for opening a discussion on the question he raised? Why should those Members of the Cabinet who entertain grave doubts as to this policy, proposed for their future consideration and possibly for their future action, resign? They were asked to take no immediate action except to vote for a Budget which was entirely consonant with the most pronounced free trade principles. It is very easy to talk about the Government being in an impossible position. Were those members of the Government who entertained doubts as to this policy to take the step of resigning and remove from the Cabinet the advantage of their presence in any discussion which might hereafter arise upon this question? It is very easy to talk of the Cabinet being in an impossible position. I conceive that if it is considered what is actually meant by the suggestion, it would have been a far more illogical and untenable position if any of the Members of the Government had felt themselves called upon to resign, at this period, at all events, of the discussion.

The Duke of Devonshire.

We, the Government, are not the only ones who may find themselves in a somewhat difficult position. Candidates for seats in the House of Commons may no doubt find themselves in a somewhat difficult position, and may find themselves deprived of that clear and decided leading which they generally look for and do not usually look for in vain. I am very sorry for some friends of mine who are placed in this position. The only advice I can offer to them is to say that the more they act on their own convictions and judgment, and the less they allow their conduct to be guided by what they may suppose to be the wishes of their constituents, the better for them. I conceive that it is the duty of any man who aspires to the honour of a seat in the other House of Parliament, on a question of such national magnitude and importance as this, to endeavour to the best of his ability to form his own judgment, and to be influenced as little as need be by what he may suppose to be the wishes and the opinions of those whom he seeks to represent. The only persons, as far as I can see, who are placed in no difficulty are noble Lords opposite; they think that both the principles and results of our present system, which I have said is not free trade, are so clear and have been so conspicuously approved, that no inquiry is required or even is permissible. I believe they will find themselves to be mistaken. I believe they will be compelled, whether they like it or not, to take their share in this great inquest which is to be opened. I believe they will find that the people of this country are not at the present time so deeply impressed with the absolute perfection of our present fiscal and commercial policy that they will view with much favour the action of those who refuse even to inquire whether it has been, as they believe, a success, or whether, as is held in other quarters, it has been but an incomplete success and is tending towards failure. I believe the best friends of free trade will be found to be those who are willing usefully to enter into a full and fair inquiry, not as to its principles, which, perhaps, we may take for granted, but as to its consequences and results. And I believe for myself that the result of any such inquiry will be to establish more firmly the essential principles which underlie our policy, although it may be found, possibly, that some modification and alteration of our arrangements may tend to strengthen and consolidate and make more unassailable and permanent a system founded essentially upon the principle of free trade.

The subject was then dropped.

NEW BILL.

BISHOPRICS OF SOUTHWARK AND BIRMINGHAM BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to provide for the constitution of Bishoprics of Southwark and Birmingham, and for matters incidental thereto—Was presented by the Lord Belper; read 1^{a}, to be printed; and to be read 2^{a} on Friday next. (No. 104.)

EDUCATION (BORROWING) BILL.

Brought from the Commons. Read 1^{a}; to be printed; and to be read 2^{a} on Tuesday, the 23rd instant.—(*The Lord Kenyon.*) (No. 105.)

UNION OF BENEFICES ACT, 1860, AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.].

Read 3^{a} (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

House adjourned at ten minutes past Twelve o'clock a.m. till half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 15*th June*, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

MILITARY MANŒUVRES (ORDER IN COUNCIL).

The COMPTROLLER OF THE HOUSEHOLD reported His Majesty's Answer to the Address of the 18th May, as followeth:—

"I have received your Address praying that I will make the Order in Council under the Military Manœuvres Act, 1897, a draft of which was presented to your House on the 17th February last.

"I will comply with your advice."

CHEW'S FOUNDATION.

The COMPTROLLER OF THE HOUSEHOLD reported His Majesty's Answer to the Address of the 28th April, as followeth:—

"I have received your address praying that I will withhold my assent to the Scheme under the Endowed Schools Act, 1869, and amending Acts, for the management of the Charity of Chew's Foundation, in the parish of Dunstable, in the county of Bedford, founded by deed of the 16th day of December, 1724.

"I will comply with your advice."

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills. That, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz.:—

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill.

Ordered, that the Bills be read a second time to-morrow.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz.:—

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (East Ham, &c.) Bill [Lords].

Ordered, that the Bill be read a second time to-morrow.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING (LONDON) BILL [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, pursuant to the Order of the House of the 11th day of June, That, in the case of the following Bill, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz. :—

Electric Lighting (London) Bill [Lords].

Dover Corporation Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Knott End Railway (Extension of Time) Bill [Lords]. Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

Merthyr Tydfil Urban District Council Bill; Wigan Corporation Tramways Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Aston Manor Improvement Bill [Lords]; British Gas Light Company (Norwich) Bill [Lords]; Cardiff Railway Bill [Lords]; Chard Corporation Gas and Electricity Bill [Lords]; Dewsbury, Batley, and Birstal Tramways Bill [Lords]; Hastings Tramways (Extensions) Bill [Lords]; Jewish Colonisation Association Bill [Lords]; King's College, London, Bill [Lords]; London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Bill [Lords]; Pontypridd Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; Port Talbot Railway and Docks Bill [Lords]; Preston, Chorley, and Horwich Tramways Bill [Lords]; St. Philip's Chapel (Regent Street) Bill [Lords]; Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation Bill [Lords]; South Lancashire Tramways Bill [Lords]; Torquay Corporation Water Bill [Lords]; Tynemouth and District Tramways Bill [Lords]; Worthing Corporation (Tramways Bill [Lords]. Read a second time, and committed.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 10) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 12) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 14) Bill; Local Government Provisional Order (No. 16) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Caledonian Railway Order Confirmation Bill; Edinburgh Corporation (Markets, Slaughter Houses, &c.) Order Confirmation Bill; Grangemouth Water Order Confirmation Bill; Lanarkshire Electricity and Refuse Destruction Order Confirmation Bill. Read the third time and passed.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [Lords]. Read a second time, and committed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to—Lanarkshire and Ayrshire Railway Order Confirmation Bill; Dundee Royal Lunatic Asylum Order Confirmation Bill; Burgess Hill and St. John's Common Gas Bill; Scarborough Gas Bill; Sittingbourne District Gas Bill, without Amendment.

Midland Railway Bill, Winchester Water and Gas Bill, with Amendments.

Amendment to—Cleveland and Durham County Electric Power Bill [Lords].

Amendments to — India Rubber, Gutta Percha, and Telegraph Works Company Bill [Lords], without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend The Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, 1894." [Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Amendment) Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confirm a Provisional Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to the North British Railway." [North British Railway (General Powers) Order Confirmation Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confirm a Provisional Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899 relating to St. Luke's Church and Parish Quoad Sacra, Edinburgh." [St. Luke's Church and Parish Quoad Sacra, Edinburgh, Order Confirmation Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Hastings Harbour District

Railway Company to construct deviation railways and new railways; to raise additional capital; and for other purposes." [Hastings Harbour District Railway Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of the city of Rochester to construct tramways and street improvements; and for other purposes." [Rochester Corporation Tramways and Improvements Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for incorporating and conferring powers on the North Western Electricity and Power-Gas Company; and for other purposes." [North Western Electricity and Power-Gas Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to incorporate the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Company, and to empower that Company to make and maintain tramways and other works in the counties of Nottingham and Derby; and for other purposes." [Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for incorporating and conferring powers on the Fife Electric Power Company." [Fife Electric Power Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to separate University College, Liverpool, from the Victoria University, and to merge it in the University of Liverpool when constituted; and to transfer all the property and liabilities of the said University College to the University of Liverpool when constituted; and for other purposes." [Liverpool University Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to extend the time for the completion of certain railways by the Barry Railway Company; to confirm an agreement between the Company and certain landowners; to empower the Company to raise additional capital, and for other purposes." [Barry Railway Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confer further powers on the Didcot, Newbury, and Southampton Railway Company." [Didcot, Newbury, and Southampton Railway Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for extending the time for the purchase of certain lands and completion of certain railways by the Taff Vale Railway Company; for enabling the company to work their railways by electrical power; and for other purposes." [Taff Vale Railway Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confer powers on the Urban District Council of Willesden with respect to their electric lighting undertaking and recreation grounds, streets, buildings, sanitary, and other matters for the good government of their district; and to transfer to them the powers of the Vestry of the Parish of Willesden; and for other purposes." [Willesden Urban District Council Bill (Lords).]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to enable the Scottish American Mortgage Company, Limited, to create preference stock; to enlarge its powers; and for other purposes." [Scottish American Mortgage Company, Limited, Bill (Lords).]

Hastings Harbour District Railway Bill [Lords]; Rochester Corporation Tramways and Improvements Bill [Lords]; North Western Electricity and Power Gas Bill [Lords]; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill [Lords]; Fife Electric Power Bill [Lords]; Liverpool University Bill [Lords]; Barry Railway Bill [Lords]; Didcot, Newbury, and Southampton Railway Bill [Lords]; Taff Vale Railway Bill [Lords]; Willesden Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; Scottish American Mortgage Company, Limited, Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

St Luke's Church and Parish Quoad Sacra, Edinburgh, Order Confirmation Bill [Lords]. To be considered to-morrow.

North British Railway (General Powers) Order Confirmation Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 23rd June, and to be printed. [Bill 245.]

PETITIONS.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.

Petition from Liverpool, against; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petition from Macclesfield, in favour to lie upon the Table.

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Wiston and Roberton; and Avondale; to lie upon the Table.

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Forres, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL

Petitions against: from North Derbyshire; and Barnard Castle; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL.

Petitions against: from North Derbyshire; and Barnard Castle; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Inverness, for alterations; to lie upon the Table.

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL.

Petition from Leicester, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

Petitions for alteration of law: from Bootle; and Macclesfield; to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petition from Chatham Corporation, against (praying to be heard by Counsel); to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EXPLOSIONS (EXPLOSION OF GUNPOWDER AT SEDGWICK, NEAR KENDAL).

Copy presented, of Report by Captain M. B. Lloyd, His Majesty's Inspector of Explosives, to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on the circumstances attending explosions of gunpowder which occurred in the glazing and corning houses of the Factory of the Sedgwick Gunpowder Company, Limited, at Sedgwick, near Kendal, Westmoreland, on the 30th March, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL TAXATION ACCOUNT (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1898.

Copy presented, of Return showing the Total Payments into and out of the Local Taxation (Scotland) Account for the financial year 1902–3 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

DUBLIN HOSPITALS.

Copy presented, of Forty-fifth Report of the Board of Superintendence, with Appendices, for the year 1902–3 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND.

Copy presented, of Twenty-first Report of the Royal University of Ireland, being for the year 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

DISEASES OF ANIMALS ACTS, 1894 AND 1896.

Copies presented, of Fourteen Orders relating to the landing in Great Britain of Foreign Animals [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2994 and 2995 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

AUSTRALIAN MAIL SERVICE.

Copy presented, of Despatch to the Governor General of Australia relating to the Exclusive Employment of White Labour [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

COLONIAL REPORTS (ANNUAL).

Copies presented, of Colonial Reports, Nos. 386 (Falkland Islands, Annual Report for 1902) and 387 (Gibraltar, Annual Report for 1902) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

NAVY (BERTHING ACCOMMODATION).

Copy presented, of Report of the Committee appointed by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to consider the question of the Berthing Accommodation for His Majesty's ships in the dockyards and other waters, and also the moorings and material required [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Importation of Milk.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY (Somersetshire, E.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Chairman of the Board of Customs is prohibited by statute from giving the names and addresses of persons importing milk from abroad; and whether, if it is desired that the names of such persons should be made public, legislation would be required; and, if so, if the Government will introduce a Bill for such purpose.

(*Answered by Mr. Elliot.*) The Board of Customs are not prohibited by statute from giving the names and addresses of the importers of milk. The names of such importers are in fact published in the periodical Customs Bill of Entry for certain ports, which are available to subscribers. It is, however, the duty of the Board of Customs to exercise discretion as to the supply of information to persons making inquiry about the business of others.

Life-Saving Precautions on Board Ship.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield Central): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if, with a view to the saving of life among passengers in the event of ships colliding at sea or meeting with other accidents, he will consider the advisability of requiring passenger lines to place a notice over every berth, showing to which boat station the occupant should repair in the event of collision, fire, or mishap requiring taking to the boats.

(*Answered by Mr. Bonar Law.*) I appreciate the motives of my hon. and gallant friend, but I fear the adoption of his suggestion is impracticable. In the opinion of the Board of Trade, any attempt to allot boat stations to passengers by previous notice would, in the event of disaster, be not only useless but dangerous. The first duty of the captain in case of serious accident is to save the women and children; and the responsibility of doing the best for all is one that can only be safely left to him.

Preservation of Big Game in Africa.

SIR HARRY SETON-KARR (St. Helens): To ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the provisions of the International Conference, held in London in May, 1899, for the preservation of big game in Africa have now been ratified by all the Powers represented thereat; and, if not, what Powers have not done so and for what reasons; whether the provisions of the conference are now being carried out in all parts of Africa under the control of the Foreign Office, and particularly if the prohibition of the export of elephant tusks under 11 lbs. in weight is being strictly enforced, and by what means; also whether, having regard to the regulation that licensees must make a return of game killed, these returns from the date the regulation come into force can be collected from all territories in Africa under the control of the Foreign Office and presented to Parliament; and whether he can state in what game reserves in Africa officials and natives are allowed to kill game, and to what extent and under what conditions; also to what extent and at what cost the sanctity of the game reserves in Africa is enforced by game wardens, police, or otherwise.

(*Answered by Lord Cranborne.*) The ratifications of the Powers have not been deposited owing to the fact that in signing the Convention the French Government reserved its obligation to ratify until Abyssinia and Liberia had acceded. These Powers had been repeatedly urged to accede, but have hitherto hesitated to do so owing to their fear that they may not be able to carry out all the provisions of the Convention. Negotiations with them are still proceeding. The provisions of the Convention are now being carried out in all the Protectorates under the control of the Foreign Office by means of the game regulations. These regulations forbid, amongst other things, the export of elephant tusks under 11 lbs. in weight, and it is the duty of all administrative officers of the Protectorates and of the Customs officials to see that they are strictly enforced It was at first found impossible to collect accurate returns of the game killed under licences, but the returns for 1901–2 for the British Central Africa Protectorate were laid before Parliament in August last (No. 2872 of the Annual Series of the Diplomatic and Consular Reports); for Somaliland in April last (see Appendices in No. 2948 of the Annual Series of the Diplomatic and Consular Reports). Those for East Africa and Uganda will be laid shortly. Officials are not allowed to shoot game for the purposes of sport in any of the reserves in the Protectorates administered by the Foreign Office. It has not yet been found possible to deal with the natives in those reserves in such a way as to prevent their hunting game within them, but the importation of firearms is carefully checked and natives are not allowed to own weapons of precision as defined in the Brussels Act. As already stated, it is the duty of all administrative officials to see that the game regulations are enforced; and in the East Africa Protectorate a special officer with the title of game ranger has been appointed for the purpose at a salary of £250, with £100 for expenses. There is no other sum specially appropriated to game preservation. Observations on the preservation of game in the Soudan will be found at page 80 of Egypt, No. 1 (1903), laid before the House in April of this year.

Treatment of Jews in Roumania.

Major EVANS GORDON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): To ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether recent correspondence relating to the treatment of the Jews in Roumania can now be laid upon the Table.

(*Answered by Lord Cranborne.*) I fear that I have nothing to add to the answer which I gave to my hon. friend on the 18th of November last.† There has been no further correspondence since that date of any material importance.

Issue of Silver Coinage.

Sir JOHN LENG (Dundee): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the £425,000 of small coins held by the Bank of England ready for issue to the public are coinage of the late or present reign; and whether supplies of coin can be obtained by others as well as bankers.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) Of the £425,000 silver coin held by the Bank of England, £417,000 is Victorian and fit for circulation; the balance of £8,000 consists of new coin of the present reign. Silver coins of any denomination, and in any quantity desired, are issued to the general public on personal application at the head office of the Bank in exchange for gold or Bank of England notes, and at country branches of the Bank of England in exchange for gold or notes of the particular branch of the Bank at which application is made. A further sum of £10,000 in sixpences of this year's date was issued to the Bank on the 9th instant and is available for issue.

India—Examination of Packages crossing the Tibetan Frontier.

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that an order has recently been issued to open and to examine all export packages passing from India across the Tibetan frontier; and whether the Government of India will take steps to prevent this interference with trade along this route.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) The Government of India have found it necessary to establish posts on our side of the frontier to prevent the export of military stores to Tibet. I see no reason to disapprove these precautionary measures.

Importation of Canadian Cattle.

The MASTER of ELIBANK (Edinburgh, Midlothian): To ask the hon. Member for Huntingdonshire, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the attention of the Department has been directed to the circumstances of the alleged outbreak of contagious pleuro-pneumonia among a cargo of Canadian cattle in 1892, on account of which an embargo was imposed and is maintained on the importation of these cattle; and, if so, whether the Department can now remove it in the interests of British feeders and Canadian ranchers.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxiv., 1231.

(*Answered by Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes.*) The circumstances to which the hon. Member refers are of course well known to the Board of Agriculture. They are fully detailed in Parliamentary Papers which were issued at the time. There is no special embargo applicable to cattle imported from Canada, but in pursuance of The Diseases of Animals Act, 1896, all animals imported to this country from abroad must be slaughtered at the port of landing. This requirement cannot be set aside by any order of the Board. I may add that the question of the admission of store cattle into the United Kingdom has been carefully examined, and that my noble friend sees no reason to depart from the policy adopted by his predecessor and endorsed in this House by a very large majority so recently as February last.

New Road from the Mall to Charing Cross.

MR. WHITMORE (Chelsea): To ask the hon. Member for West Derbyshire, as representing the First Commissioner of Works, whether he will have placed in the Tea Room plans and drawings showing how it is proposed to carry out the opening of the Mall into Charing Cross.

(*Answered by Mr. Victor Cavendish.*) The plan that it is hoped will be carried out is substantially the same as that shown in a plan attached to the Report of the Select Committee upon the Public Offices (Appropriation of Sites) of 1896 (House of Commons Paper, No. 310).

Experiments on Dogs without Anæsthetics.

MR. PERKS (Lincolnshire, Louth): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, as reported at a recent meeting of the Committee of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, Professor Schäfer has obtained permission to conduct experiments on dogs without anæsthetics for the purpose of investigating the phenomena of death from drowning; is he aware that these experiments have hitherto been conducted under chloroform; and will he take steps to prevent the infliction of cruelty which the experiments authorised involve.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas.*) Professor Schäfer has obtained the certificates required by the Act to enable him to perform certain experiments on dogs for the purpose of investigating, not the phenomena of death from drowning, but the best means of effecting resuscitation in cases of apparent drowning. The experiments will be performed on behalf of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London, who have appointed a committee to consider this question. I am aware that Professor Schäfer has performed experiments on the effect of immersion on anæsthetised dogs, but I am informed that the use of anæsthetics frustrated the object of the experiments. In view of the great importance of the subject in connection with the saving of human life, and of the strong recommendations received in support of the experiments, I have not felt justified in disallowing the certificates.

Hooliganism in the Metropolis.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case of the death at Southwark of a young man, through injuries received on 29th May in the Walworth Road, owing to assault by three roughs, and to the remarks of the coroner upon the amount of hooliganism in the district, and of the danger of walking about the Borough, even in broad daylight; and, if so, whether steps will be taken to increase the police protection in that district, especially owing to the small increase in the police force in the Metropolitan area during the last ten years.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas.*) So far as I can ascertain by inquiry into the case to which the hon. Member refers, the young man was struck by two men with whom he was walking; he was at work next day, and it was not till a day or two afterwards that he complained of being ill. The death may have been attributable to injuries received on the 29th May; but the coroner's jury found that the evidence was not sufficient to show the cause of it, and they returned an open verdict. No complaint was made to the police by the deceased, nor does the case appear to be one of hooliganism at all. No complaints have been received by the police from the coroner, and I have no reason to suppose that the number of police in the Borough is not adequate for the reasonable requirements of the district.

Tuberculosis Commission—Report of Progress.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): To ask the President of the Local Government Board what progress has been made in the investigations by the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis during the past twelve months on the two farms at Stansted, lent by Sir James Blyth; and whether a Report will shortly be issued.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) I am informed that considerable progress has been made in the investigations instituted by the Royal Commission. It is stated, however, that the ground to be covered by the experiments is very extensive, and that some time must necessarily elapse before any Report by the Commission can be issued.

Education Committees—Eligibility for Membership.

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether the Nottinghamshire County Council have any power under the Education Act of 1902 to prevent the chairman of the Sutton-in-Ashfield Urban District Council, who is the head teacher of the central Board schools, from serving on the local education committee; and whether the fact of this gentleman being the head teacher of the Board schools disqualifies him from being a member of the Urban District Council.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) If the local education committee referred to is the committee of the Nottinghamshire County Council, that Council can certainly determine the *personnel* of its education committee. As Sutton-in-Ashfield is not an autonomous area, there is nothing to disqualify the head teacher of the Board school in that area from being a member of the Urban District Council, unless, in the view of the Board of Education or the County Council, his duties on the Urban District Council should interfere with the proper discharge of his duties as a teacher.

MR MARKHAM: To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether his attention has been called to a circular issued by the Nottinghamshire County Council to the Urban District Councils of this county with reference to the appointment of school managers under the Education Act of 1902 in which the Nottinghamshire County Council have decided that no one shall be eligible to be appointed by the County Council as a manager of any school if a member of his family is employed in that school; and will he state if the Nottinghamshire County Council have any power under the Education Act to enforce this rule, and if not, will he call upon them to at once withdraw this circular.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) My attention has not been called to the circular in question. There is nothing to prevent a County Council from determining the qualifications or disqualifications for managers chosen by itself, but not for managers chosen by the minor local authority. Under the circumstances stated in the Question I see no reason for the intervention of the Board of Education.

Rental of Lands in Irish Land Court.

MR. BUTCHER (York): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the gross rental of lands in the Court of the Irish Land Judge in the hands of receivers before the application of the Act of 1896, and the gross rental of lands at present in the hands of such receivers.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The rental of lands in this Court in the hands of receivers in the year 1895 was £793,821. In the year 1902, the latest period for which the figures are at present available, the rental was £449,106. It is right to state that these amounts include the rental of non-agricultural hereditaments as well as agricultural, and of estates managed for other Judges of the Chancery Division where no order for sale has been made.

Inquiry into Condition of Irish Blind.

MR. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Commission appointed by the Lord Lieutenant to inquire into the Poor Law system will embrace an inquiry into the condition of the Irish blind; and, if not, can he see his way to widen the scope of the inquiry with a view to securing this object.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) It will be competent to the Commission to inquire into the condition of the blind who are relieved from the poor rates.

Salary of Manual Instructresses in Irish National Schools.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork Co., W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that manual instructresses in national schools give instruction in needlework, kindergarten, hand and eye training, and object lessons, and give service during the entire school day, and that £24 per annum is the maximum salary for such service, he will recommend that a portion of the Equivalent Grant or some other fund be allocated for increasing their salaries.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) I am not yet in a position to make an announcement in reference to the allocation of this Grant.

Evictions in County Tipperary.

MR. CONDON (Tipperary, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will grant a Return of the names, valuations, and causes of evictions of tenants in the county of Tipperary during the fifties, sixties, and seventies, where such lands remain on owners' hands, together with names of local representatives of each evicted tenant.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) There are no official records in existence that would enable such a Return to be prepared.

Fixing of Rates in Cork.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Cork): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to a difficulty now experienced by the County Borough Council of Cork, due to the impossibility of levying the rates in time to provide funds for Poor Law and municipal purposes, owing to the fact that the revised valuation lists do not come to hand from the General Valuation Office, Dublin, before 1st March, the time fixed by statute; that the financial year begins on 1st April, leaving only one month for fixing the rates and the preparation of the rate book, which requires at least seven weeks; and whether, seeing that the Board of Guardians are now instructing their law agents to proceed against the corporation, while the Local Government Board will not permit the Council to pay interest to the bank on an overdraft, he will say what steps he proposes to take to deal with this difficulty.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) My attention has been directed to this matter by a communication received from the hon. Member. In the case of counties no difficulty should be experienced in paying these demands in advance, as the Councils receive an instalment of the Agricultural Grant at the end of March, as well as other advances from the Local Taxation Account. But in some of the county boroughs difficulty has been experienced in making the payments referred to in the early part of the financial year. I am inquiring whether it is practicable by administrative action to provide a remedy to meet the latter difficulty.

South African War—Militia Officers' Gratuity.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, Chelmsford): To ask the Secretary of State for War why an officer of Militia who has served in South Africa for two years with embodied battalion is not eligible for the £100 allowance.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) It is not clear to what grant reference is made, but the terms on which the outfit allowance was granted have been explained in previous replies † to Questions put by my hon. and gallant friend, to which I fear I can add nothing.

South African War Compensation Claims.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in view of the fact that the Colonial Office is unable to state the number and amount of claims for compensation which have been lodged by the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies, will he state how the Department arrives at the sum required for the satisfaction of these claims.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) The Government has never undertaken to satisfy claims for compensation for war losses in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony. As far as ex-burghers of the late Republics are concerned, the £3,000,000 which has been set apart for them was fixed by Article 10 of the Terms of Surrender. It will be distributed *pro rata* among those who have suffered war losses and are in actual want of relief. The £2,000,000 set apart for British subjects, neutral foreigners, and natives will be distributed *pro rata* among all who are held to be entitled to some compensation for war losses. It is a sum estimated by Lord Milner to be sufficient to provide each recipient with a larger measure of compensation than the ex-burghers will receive from the £3,000,000 above referred to.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Army Veterinary Department.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can say when the recommendations of the Committee appointed to consider the condition of the Army Veterinary Department will be brought into force, as the last meeting of this Committee took place in February; and, whether, seeing that there are now 35 vacancies in the Army Veterinary Department, and it is 20 per cent. below its authorised peace establishment, he will state how many candidates there are for these vacancies.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): The Report of the Committee is now under consideration. There are at present five candidates and thirty-six vacancies.

The Somaliland Operations.

CAPTAIN NORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has any information to give with reference to the statement in the Press to the effect that the Mullah has cut the British lines of communication between Galadi and Bohotle; whether Colonel Cobbe, now at Galadi, can return to General Manning; and whether General Manning can render any assistance to Colonel Cobbe.

*MR. BRODRICK: The Government are not in possession of more information with regard to the position of Colonel Cobbe and the movements of the Mullah than has been published in the Press this morning. On the other hand, some five or six weeks ago instructions were sent to General Manning to concentrate at Bohotle; and, according to the estimate given us, a considerable portion of General Manning's force would be already concentrated at Bohotle. But I have telegraphed for particulars from the officer commanding at Bohotle.

CAPTAIN NORTON: But the force is cut off from its base?

*MR. BRODRICK: I have said nothing to indicate that in any way. I have no information corroborative of some private telegrams which have appeared in one of the newspapers to that effect.

New Army Cap.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War who is responsible for the design of the new German cap for the British Army; whether it was adopted with a view to increasing the popularity of the service; and whether he is aware that there has been a marked falling off in the number of applicants for enlistment since the new cap has come into wear.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers may I ask if the right hon. Gentleman will consider the desirability of referring the whole question of the new military outfit to a Committee of Milliners?

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxvi., 911.

*MR. BRODRICK: The new cap was designed to give better protection to the head, with the addition of a cap cover, than the late field cap which was not found to give sufficient protection in the manœuvres of 1898. It was designed by the Army Clothing Committee in 1901, and the year following its introduction the largest number of recruits joined the Army who have enlisted since the short service system was instituted.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): Was it at the instance of the War Office that this cap was sent over to the Irish police?

[No answer was returned.]

Naval Bases.

MR. ROSE (Cambridgeshire, Newmarket): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether it is intended to establish a naval base at Sydney (Cape Breton), at an early date in view of the maintenance of a strong French squadron at St. Pierre, Miquelon.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W.): The reply is in the negative.

Germany and Canadian Tariffs.

MR. BLACK (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, in view of the fact that Canada has differentiated against Germany as compared with certain European nations other than the mother country, he proposes to protect Canada from being on this ground removed by Germany from the category of a most favoured nation by imposing retaliatory duties in Great Britain against Germany.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): Canada has only differentiated against Germany after it had been for five years excluded from the most-favoured-nation treatment in that country in consequence of the preference voluntarily given by Canada to the mother country. The situation thus created is one of the subjects to which I have recently called the attention of the country, and in regard to which I have invited discussion.

MR. BLACK: May I take it that Canada did not differentiate in favour of France at the same time that she differentiated in favour of the mother country.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The hon. Member is aware that the differentiation was in favour of the mother country, accompanied by the statement that certain preferences would be given to any British possession, or, in fact, to any other country which gave reciprocal treatment.

Boer Grievances.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether General Louis Botha has summoned a public meeting at Heidelberg, Transvaal, for the 20th June, to discuss various political grievances; and, if so, will he state what is the nature of the matters to be brought before the meeting; and whether any communications on the subject have passed between Lord Milner and the Colonial Office, and in that case will he lay copies thereof upon the Table.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I have no information on the subject beyond what I have read in the Press.

MR. JOHN ELLIS: Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire into this serious matter?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: No, Sir.

Dynamite Duty in South Africa.

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, during the autumn of last year, he received petitions from British dynamite manufacturers protesting against the attempt of the De Beers Company and others to establish a new dynamite monopoly in South Africa; and whether, seeing that a coast duty of 7s. 6d. a case has recently been sanctioned by Lord Milner, and that the mining companies of the Transvaal other than those controlled by the

Directors of the De Beers Company and their friends are opposed to this monopoly, will he instruct Lord Milner to remove this duty in the interest of British manufacturers and the general mining community.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I have received petitions of the nature stated in the Question. Under the new Customs Unions Convention, which has been laid on the Table, the duty on explosives at the coast ports is fixed at 1½d. per pound or 6s. 3d. a case. The question of an Excise duty of equal amount to the import duty is under consideration.

Alleged Ill-treatment of Indian Storekeepers in South Africa.

MR. MARKHAM: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, seeing that in the letter addressed to him by Mr. Abdool Gani, chairman of the British Indian Association, last month, specific charges were made in relation to the ill-treatment of respectable Indian storekeepers at Heidelberg, Johannesburg, and Potchefstroom, he will say whether a definite statement was made by Mr. Abdool Gani on behalf of the association that under Mr. Kruger's administration British Indian subjects were never subjected to the physical ill-treatment they are at present suffering; and what steps he has taken to put an end to this condition of affairs.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I have not received any letter making these charges.

MR. MARKHAM: Did not the right hon. Gentleman say last week he had received a letter?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The hon. Member asks if I have received a letter making specific charges. I say I have not, but I have received a letter from Mr. Gani.

Irrigation Works in India.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the allocation of capital expenditure in the current year (as per Return 137) of 59,000,000 rupees for railways and 4,500,000 rupees for irrigation projects is open to revision; and, if so, whether it is the intention of the Government of India to increase the grant under the latter head with a view to promoting the extension of water storage in India as a precaution against future drought.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): The figures of 4,500,000 rupees given in Return No. 137 refer only to expenditure on Major Irrigation Works actually in course of construction at the date of the Return. The financial statement for this year shows that in 1903–04 it is proposed to expend £666,700 on the construction of Major Irrigation Works, £166,700 on the construction of Protective Irrigation Works, and £810,500 (net) on the construction and maintenance of Minor Irrigation Works, the last two amounts being charged against the revenue of the year. This gives a total expenditure of £1,643,900 on Irrigation Works. The Government of India, after full consideration, deliberately put forward this Estimate of expenditure, and I know of no reason why it should be now altered.

Brussels Sugar Convention.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the secret Commission now sitting at Brussels is the Permanent Commission provided for under Article 7 of the Sugar Convention; if so, who is the English delegate; whether it is authorised to name the sugar exporting countries, outside those which have approved of the Convention, against which the ports in this country are to be closed under the Sugar Convention Bill; if so, whether, before any decision is reached in their case, due notice will be given to these countries, and whether they will have an opportunity of appearing by counsel, or otherwise, before the Commission; and, if not, whether Great Britain will be obliged to put in force the decisions at which this secret Commission may arrive.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord CRANBORNE, Rochester): The Commission now sitting at Brussels is the permanent Commission provided for under Article 7 of the Brussels Sugar Convention. The British delegate is Sir Henry Bergne, K.C.M.G., and he is accompanied by four assistant delegates. The answer to the third Question is in the affirmative. The decisions of the Commission will no doubt be announced without unnecessary delay, but, subject to the terms of the Convention, their procedure is a matter for the determination of the Commission itself. With regard to the last Question, Great Britain is of course bound by the terms of the Convention.

MR. LOUGH: Will any opportunity be given to any country against which proceedings are to be taken to be heard?

LORD CRANBORNE: That is a matter of procedure to be determined by the Commission itself.

Shanghai-Nanking Railway.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Government have received official information as to the issue of the Imperial Decree sanctioning the construction of the Shanghai-Nanking Railway, and as to when the final contract will be signed; and whether he is in a position to state the main provisions of the contract.

LORD CRANBORNE: On the 11th instant His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Peking telegraphed that an Imperial Decree had been issued and officially communicated to him sanctioning the Agreement for the construction of this railway. He had previously reported that as soon as the Imperial assent had been given the agreement would be signed at Shanghai. The railway, which is to be built and financed by the British and Chinese Corporation, must be begun within twelve months and finished within five years of the conclusion of the agreement. It is to be the property of the Chinese Government and to be administered by a Board of Control consisting of two Chinese nominees and three members appointed by the British and Chinese Corporation. The railway is to be mortgaged as security for the loan to be made by the Corporation to the Chinese Government.

The Assassinations in Servia.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): In accordance with private notice I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether His Majesty's Government propose to continue diplomatic relations with those persons who, having been concerned in the assassination of the late King and Queen of Servia, now assume to act as the Government of Servia; what attitude the Government proposes to assume, and what steps it proposes to take in consequence of these recent events; and whether negotiations with other Powers are going on with a view to common and concerted action.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I can only say that at present the matter is under consideration; but as far as diplomatic relations are concerned, they came *ipso facto* to an end with the death of the King of Servia, because our representative in Servia was accredited only to the late King. Those relations have therefore terminated of themselves. If my hon. friend thinks this an inadequate answer—as perhaps he may—he can put a Question on the Paper.

Income Tax on Foreign Bonds.

MR. ROSE: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can state the system adopted for the collection of Income Tax on foreign bonds to bearer held in England, the interest on which is payable abroad.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): The Income Tax on foreign bonds to bearer, the interest of which is paid abroad, is for the most part collected under the provisions of the Act 48 and 49 Vict., Chap. 51, Section 26, which prescribes that a banker or other person who obtains payment of the coupons shall deduct Income Tax from the proceeds, and account therefor to the Special Commissioners of Income Tax.

In cases where the owner of the bonds obtains payment of his coupons direct from abroad, he would be liable to include the proceeds in his return for direct assessment under Schedule D.

Treatment of Lunatics.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the death of Charles Joseph Smart in the Middlesex County Asylum; and, if so, will he state whether this man was just before his death placed in a strait-jacket without the doctor's orders, and whether inquiries will be made into the whole matter.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. AKERS DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): This man died on the day after he was received in the asylum, to which he had been removed in a strait waistcoat from the Isleworth Workhouse. I understand that the latter part of the Question is being made the subject of inquiry by my right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Is it not only unusual but improper to put a patient into a strait-jacket without the doctor's orders?

*MR. AKERS DOUGLAS: That Question should be addressed to the Local Government Board. This case only came under my notice when the patient was brought into the asylum from the workhouse.

China and Earthenware Industries and Workmen's Compensation.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state the number of firms manufacturing china and earthenware in the Potteries district, and the number of these firms insured under the compensation scheme; also the number of persons employed in the manufacture of china and earthenware in the district, and the number insured under the scheme.

*MR. AKERS DOUGLAS: According to the latest Returns in my possession there are in the North Staffordshire Potteries district 364 works at which earthenware and china are made, employing 4,857 persons. In ninety of these works, where 2,750 persons are employed, an insurance scheme has been adopted.

Alien Immigration.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can say when the Report of the Royal Commission upon Alien Immigration will be presented; and, if so, can he state when he will be prepared to introduce legislation in conformity therewith, having regard to the disturbances between the native population and Aliens; has the right hon. Gentleman's attention been called to further murders by aliens recently?

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BONAR LAW, Glasgow, Blackfriars): I understand that the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration has concluded the taking of evidence and is now considering its Report. Until the Report is received I am not able to make any statement with regard to legislation.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): May I ask what time is likely to elapse before the Report is presented, and whether it will be in time for legislation this session.

MR. BONAR LAW: I see no prospect of its being in time for legislation this session.

The Tariff Question—Treatment of British Trade by Foreign Countries.

MR. LAMBERT (Devonshire, South Molton): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will name the countries which deny to British imports treatment accorded to imports from other foreign countries.

MR. BONAR LAW: Generally speaking, the only countries, so far as I am aware, in which imports from the United Kingdom do not receive complete most-favoured-nation treatment are the

United States of America, where we do not enjoy the benefit of the reductions on certain articles conceded to France and other countries under reciprocal agreements, and Portugal, which withholds from certain British goods the reductions conceded by treaty to Russia, Norway, and Holland, also certain of the South and Central American Republics grant special favour to the citizens and products of the neighbouring States, which are not enjoyed by British subjects and products.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: Is there not a most-favoured-nation arrangement between this country and the United States?

MR. BONAR LAW: Yes.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: Can you name any country in which British goods get the same treatment as foreign goods do in this country?

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Have we not a most-favoured-nation arrangement with Portugal?

MR. BONAR LAW: Yes, but there are exceptions which I have read out.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I fail to understand what is meant by "exceptions."

Edinburgh Magistrates and the Wellington Reformatory.

MR. JOHN DEWAR (Inverness): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been directed to the fact that there are sixty-six lads sentenced by Edinburgh magistrates at present inmates of the Wellington Reformatory, and that application has been made to the Home Secretary for authority to discharge these lads, in respect that the Town Council of Edinburgh refuses to contribute towards their maintenance; and whether, in view of the statement of one of the sheriff substitutes that the Reformatory Act is a dead letter in Edinburgh, and that the Judges of the city are prevented from inflicting the only sentence which promises any permanent good to the criminal, he is prepared to take such steps as may be necessary to remedy these matters.

In putting the Question the hon. Member asked further if it was the fact that a boy had already been discharged from the Reformatory, because of the refusal of the magistrates to pay the cost of his maintenance, although his sentence of five years had not expired. Would the right hon. Gentleman take steps——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! That should be the subject of a separate Question.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SCOTT DICKSON, Glasgow, Bridgton): Perhaps I may be allowed to answer the Question on the Paper. I am aware of the position of matters in Edinburgh referred to by the hon. Member. The Secretary for Scotland has made repeated representations during the last twelve months to the Town Council drawing their attention to the responsibility they are incurring in regard to the maintenance of Edinburgh children in reformatories. I understand from my right hon. friend the Home Secretary that as responsible for the administration of the Reformatory Acts he has also been in communication both with the Town Council and with the Wellington Reformatory managers, and that there is some prospect of an arrangement being reached which will obviate any necessity for taking any steps as proposed by the hon. Member.

Galway Docks.

MR. CHARLES DEVLIN (Galway): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what steps have been taken to carry out the portion of the scheme under The Marine Act, 1902, for the dredging of waterways; and if he would make inquiries in reference to the entrance into the Galway Docks which, from silting in the channel, large vessels are now prevented from entering, necessitating the discharge of cargoes in the roadstead, causing loss and expense to the shipowners and merchants in Galway.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): The scheme under the Marine Works

Act does not deal with the dredging of waterways except so far as may be necessary in connection with works proposed to be undertaken under the Act. That Act does not embrace such a case as that of Galway Harbour. It is the duty of the harbour authority to make provision for clearing the channel.

Corofin District Council Chairmanship.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland why the Local Government Board in Ireland have refused to sanction the election of Mr. Flanagan as chairman of the Corofin District Council.

MR. WYNDHAM: The election of chairman of a District Council does not require the sanction of the Local Government Board. But Mr. Flanagan, having been convicted and sentenced to a term of imprisonment with hard labour, is disqualified by law from being a member of the Corofin District Council.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in view of the peaceful state of affairs in Ireland, the Government cannot do something to remove this disqualification, which causes very widespread dissatisfaction and may cause a great deal of trouble?

MR. WYNDHAM: It is a disability which could only be removed by legislation.

Proposed Pier at Salthill, Galway.

MR. CHARLES DEVLIN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he has received from various bodies, municipal and otherwise, of Galway city and county, representations of the dangers to which the fishermen are exposed in violent weather owing to their inability to reach the harbour and the loss to their business through delay in reaching the markets, and of the advantages which would accrue from the construction of a pier at Salthill; and, if so, will he state what grant has been proposed in the matter.

MR. WYNDHAM: Representations to this effect have been received. The County Council has been informed that it will not be practicable to expend any money on the proposed undertaking under the Marine Works Act.

Irish Agricultural Holdings.

MR. CAREW (Meath, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of agricultural holdings in Ireland valued at over £200.

MR. WYNDHAM: The number is 4,745, according to the last Census.

Irish Trade Statistics.

MR. LOUGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Government can arrange to provide complete monthly and annual statistics of all commodities exported from and brought into Ireland, with a view to providing that country with information respecting its progress, such as is furnished in other civilised States.

MR. BONAR LAW: As the hon. Member is doubtless aware, statistics of the trade done directly by Ireland with foreign countries and British possessions are contained in the volumes of the "Annual Statement of the Trade of the United Kingdom." No official records exist of the trade passing between Great Britain and Ireland, and I fear that any system that could be devised for collecting such information would prove a hindrance to trade.

MR. LOUGH: In view of the fact that practically the whole body of Irish trade is with Great Britain, will not the hon. Gentleman promise to consider whether these vital statistics cannot be provided.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the Irish Agricultural Department in Ireland is most anxious to get these statistics?

MR. BONAR LAW: I am sure if the Irish Office approaches the Board of Trade in that matter we shall be glad to consider their suggestions.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Has the hon. Gentleman no settled convictions on the matter?

[No answer was returned.]

Charitable Loan Fund (Ireland) Act, 1900.

MR. JOHN CAMPBELL (Armagh, Mid): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether it is his intention to have the Charitable Loan Fund (Ireland) Act, 1900, amended at an early date by granting an extension of the time for collection, so as to enable the receivers of the societies to collect the outstanding debts which have been blocked through the recent decision of the Court of Appeal in the case of Reiley *v.* Magistrates of Tyrone and Fermanagh.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.): An amending Bill with the object stated in the Question has been drafted, and I should be prepared to introduce it upon receiving an assurance from hon. Members that it will be treated as a non-contentious measure.

Railway Delivery of Irish Butter around London.

MR. JOYCE (Limerick): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the fact that Irish butter, which arrives in London thirty-six hours after consignment from the south-west of Ireland, takes forty-eight hours longer to be delivered at any place within a radius of twenty-five to forty miles of London, while foreign butters are delivered punctually in the same districts; and, if so, will he, in the interest of the Irish saltless butter trade, take steps to have this state of things remedied by the railway companies over whose lines this produce is carried.

MR. BONAR LAW: The Board of Trade have received no representations alleging such delay in the delivery of Irish butter by railway as compared with foreign butter, but if any specific cases of delay are submitted to the Board, inquiry will at once be made into the circumstances.

Greenwich Hospital Fund Pensions.

MR. KEARLEY (Devonport): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the loss of life occasioned by the recent explosion on H.M.S. "Good Hope," he is now able to announce the decision of the Government with regard to granting State pensions to the widows and orphans of those seamen and marines who lose their lives on duty similar to those awarded to the widows and orphans of men killed on war service.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes, Sir. Arrangements have now been made by the Admiralty that the pensions granted from the Greenwich Hospital Fund to the widows and children of the seamen and Marines who lose their lives by accident shall be supplemented from the Navy Votes so as to bring them up to the war scale laid down in 1901. This arrangement will cover the cases of existing widows and orphans.

MR. KEARLEY: Will the concession be retro-active?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes, Sir, I said so.

Inquiry into Preferential Tariffs.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury how the inquiry into the relative advantages and disadvantages of a fundamental change in our fiscal system, involving the taxation of all food stuffs from foreign sources and their free entry from our self-governing colonies is to be pursued; whether it is to be an official inquiry; if so, to whom it is to be entrusted, and to whom inquiry is to be addressed, and how long is it expected to last; and whether an opportunity will speedily be given for the constituencies to express their opinions in regard to the contemplated change, in order to limit as far as possible the injury to trade and commerce which a lengthy uncertainty might produce.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The inquiry will, of course, be conducted by His Majesty's Government and on the responsibility of that Government.

MR. LABOUCHERE: By the Board of Trade?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It will be conducted by the Government on its own responsibility.

MR. LABOUCHERE: By what Department? By the Board of Trade? And what will be the form of the inquiry? Will it be by Royal Commission?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am sorry that I have been so obscure. It will not be by Royal Commission, or by Committee of this House, or by a Departmental Committee. It will not be concerned with any one Department.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): Will the Proceedings and the Report be published?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member below the Gangway has never served in the Cabinet, but the right hon. Gentleman has; and he must know that inquiries of this sort conducted by a Cabinet do not necessarily lead to a Report.

MR. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland): Is it wholly to enable the Cabinet to make up its mind?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The inquiry is in order that the Cabinet and the House and the country may be informed. These are really most extraordinary Questions. I do not object to them. I rather like them. Hon. Members show extraordinary ignorance as to the ordinary methods by which the proceedings, legislative and administrative, of the Government are carried on. Most of them are preceded by Government inquiry, and the House of Commons and the country are at the proper time taken into the confidence of the Government.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cornwall, Camborne): Is it intended that the inquiry shall be completed before the General Election?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As I do not know the length of the inquiry nor the time when the General Election will take place, I am not in a position to answer the Question.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Denis Kilbride, Esq., for the County of Kildare (South Kildare Division).

MUNICIPAL TRADING.

Ordered, That the Report and Minutes of the evidence of the Joint Committee on Municipal Trading of Session 1900 be referred to the Select Committee appointed by this House to join with a Committee of the House of Lords on municipal trading.—(*Mr. Powell-Williams.*)

NEW BILL.

CONGESTED DISTRICTS (SCOTLAND) (No. 2) BILL.

"To amend the provisions of the Congested Districts (Scotland) Act, 1897, as to the application of the fund constituted by the Act," presented by the Lord Advocate; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, and to be printed. [Bill 244.]

IRISH LAND [ADVANCES, ETC.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Resolved, That, for carrying out the provisions of any Act of the present session to amend the law relating to the occupation and ownership of land in Ireland, it is expedient—

(*a*) To authorise the creation of capital stock for raising money required for the Irish Land Purchase Fund and the Land Purchase Aid Fund, and to authorise the National Debt Commissioners to borrow and lend money for the purposes aforesaid, and to charge on the Consolidated Fund the payment of the dividends on such stock so far as not paid out of the income of the Irish Land Purchase Fund, and to authorise the payment out of money to be provided by Parliament of sums sufficient to pay the dividends and sinking fund required for the Land Purchase Aid Fund.

(*b*) To authorise the payment out of money to be provided by Parliament of the salaries of the Estates Commissioners, the Public Trustee, and of officers and persons employed by them, and of certain expenses of the Land Commission; and

(*c*) To authorise the payment out of the Consolidated Fund of superannuation allowances to certain Land Commissioners. — (*Mr. Wyndham.*)

Resolution to be reported to-morrow.

IRISH LAND BILL.

On the order for Committee being read—

*MR. SPEAKER ruled out of order an instruction standing in the name of the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydvil giving the Committee power to extend the provisions of the Bill to Wales and Monmouthshire. It was quite out of the question, he said, to apply the Land Purchase laws of Ireland, which formed a separate Code, to England or Wales by instruction.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Clause 1—

MR. HERBERT ROBERTSON (Hackney, S.) moved to insert in line 1 of Clause 1, after "sale of," the words "one or more holdings, or." He said this raised the question of the principle on which the Bill was founded. Both sides were agreed in the desire that land purchase in Ireland should work as smoothly as possible, and that there should be no difficulties thrown in the way either of landlord or of tenant. Now the Bill said that what the landlord was to be enabled to sell, and what the tenant was to be enabled to buy, was an "estate," and an estate was defined in Section 85 of the Bill as "any lands which the Estate Commissioners may see fit to be regarded as a separate estate for the purposes of the Act." Thus, before any sale could take place, before any agreement could be made between landlord and tenant, they would have to find out whether the particular property to be dealt with was or was not an estate. That would throw a great difficulty in the way of sales, for a landlord would be loth to deal with any of his tenants, and the tenants would be loth to deal with the landlord without some assurance that the property in question would be considered to be an estate under the Act. The landlord would be forced, in the first instance, to go to the Estates Commissioners and ask the question—"If I agree to make an arrangement with such and such a tenant will you deem the property an estate?' He would have to ask even more, and would have to inquire—"If I fail to agree with a tenant as to a certain part, will you accept the remainder as an estate?" Surely it was not necessary that the word "estate" should require any definition, and surely if the property constituted a holding subject to the Irish Land Law, that ought to be sufficient to enable landlord and tenant to come to an agreement in the knowledge that the necessary money would be advanced. The only possible objection was that there might be some holdings which it would not be advantageous to advance money upon. True, there might be certain uneconomic holdings, but if that were so, they ought to be dealt with by way of exception, and there should be in the Act some means by which rules could be laid down to provide for such cases. If the plan he suggested were adopted it would much simplify the working of the Act.

Amendment proposed.

"In page 1, line 8, after the words 'sale of' to insert the words 'one or more holdings, or.'" —(*Mr. Herbert Robertson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover) said he was unable to accept the Amendment.

It was admitted that great advantage would accrue from dealing with large areas, and it would strike at the very foundation of the Bill if those advantages were to be given separately in the case of what he might call small isolated purchases. This Bill took away no existing rights, and as the law now stood these small purchases could be carried out, but it was not to be expected that in cases where only two or three farms were the subject of the agreement, the parties should enjoy all the advantages of the costly machinery erected under the Bill.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said it was quite true that under the present Land Purchase Act a tenant could buy an individual holding from his landlord, and that that right was not taken away by this Bill. He should be inclined to limit the clause in the direction to be proposed by the hon. Member for Louth, and did not, therefore, propose to either support this Amendment or to propose the one he had himself placed on the Paper, to insert after "estate" the words "or any part thereof."

*SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth) regretted that the Chief Secretary had not been able to give a more satisfactory reply. As he now understood it, any sale carried out must be of an entire estate. ["No, no."] Then what was the intention? The marginal description of the clause was to regulate "advances for purchase of holdings where a whole estate is sold." He understood the right hon. Gentleman objected to putting in anything that would enable part of an estate to be sold under Clause 1. It was desirable to have some definite idea, then, as to what the word "estate" really meant. If it did not mean the whole estate, or if it would apply to a single holding, what objection could there be to the Amendment?

MR. WYNDHAM said that his hon. friend had fallen into an error which nearly everybody fell into at first blush. The word "estate" meant in common parlance the whole property of an owner; but "estate" in the Bill meant that which the Estate Commission believed was an area of land which could be conveniently dealt with *in globo.*

*SIR JOHN COLOMB asked if it would be possible for a landowner to know before he entered into negotiations with the tenant how the matter was going to end—whether the Land Commission would regard it as an estate or not.

MR. WYNDHAM said that they could not anticipate by statutory enactment all the difficulties that might arise in administering an Act of Parliament; but if his hon. and gallant friend would consider the composition of the Estate Commission, and all the provisions in the Bill, he himself would find no difficulty in discovering what the result of the clause would be. If they went the extreme length of appointing a public officer, a public trustee who might be consulted by private individuals, he thought that that was as far as they could go.

*MR. BUTCHER (York) said that the point raised was of the greatest importance. It was essential before the landowner opened negotiations with his tenants that he should know whether what he proposed to sell was considered an estate or not. He might take all the trouble of negotiating with his tenant and then bring the agreement to the Land Commission who might say "That is not an estate at all, and therefore we will not sanction the sale." His object was to render it an easy, cheap, and satisfactory process for the landlord to sell and the tenant to buy, and he appealed to the right hon. Gentleman to consider whether he could not at some subsequent stage introduce some provision which would render it possible for the landlord to consult with the Estate Commission and say "I propose to sell this portion of my land, will you consider it an estate? And, if so, will you sanction the sale?".

MR. WYNDHAM said that his hon. and learned friend had overlooked the fact that in the Bill he had reserved as an alternative the procedure introduced last year. In an ordinary case no one could be in any doubt as to the result;

but if there were exceptional circumstances, the number and character of which could not be anticipated, the best plan would be to sell the estate to the Land Commission instead of by private bargain.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB asked if it was not the case that under Clause 1 the bonus entirely depended on the land being an estate or not.

MR. WYNDHAM said that that question could be more conveniently discussed on another Amendment.

Question put, and negatived.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) said he had an Amendment on the Paper to leave out of line 8, Clause 1, the word "whether" and insert "except," in order to understand what the position was in regard to this particular clause. He understood that the provisions in the clause were necessary in order, in certain cases, to protect the rights of the remainder man. But surely no such provisions were necessary in the case of a sale to the Land Commission. Was it to be supposed that the Land Commission would allow sales to take place by which the remainder man would be in the least degree prejudiced? What he wanted was free transactions, free sales between landlord and tenant. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

> "In page 1, line 8, to leave out the word 'whether' and insert the word 'except.'"—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

Question proposed, "That the word proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) said that this was a very important Amendment. It raised perhaps the most important question in the whole Bill, but in a partial manner and in a manner on which the point could not be fully and satisfactorily discussed. The question raised by the Amendment was whether these restrictions and limitations should apply to holdings that were sold through the Land Commission; but it left the Bill to apply to cases of direct sale between landlord and tenant. He understood that the object of the Government was that the ordinary case of the sale of land should be the result of direct bargaining between landlord and tenant, and that the sale through the Land Commission should be the exception. In laying down that basis to their Bill the Government had followed the recommendation of the Land Conference, which most people in Ireland approved of. If this Amendment were carried one result would be that sales through the Land Commission would be carried out under more favourable conditions than sales direct; in fact, the tendency would be to abolish direct sales altogether. That was a purpose which he and his friends around him could not sympathise with at all. This question of limitations could not be satisfactorily dealt with piece-meal or in compartments, and it should be reserved till another Amendment further down on the Paper was reached.

MR. WYNDHAM said that he was unable to accept the Amendment for many reasons, but also for one not yet adduced. The Amendment, coming at this stage of the Bill, would decide the questions raised in Sub-sections 2 and 3 of Clause 5, in which directions were laid down to guide the Estate Commission in their estimate of the price which it would be proper for them to offer to a landlord. It was not confined to the cases referred to by the hon. Member for Waterford, but applied to many other cases. He could not consent to the omission of these most important Sub-sections.

MR. T. M. HEALY said he had put down the Amendment as showing his aversion to the principle of the clause. He thought the whole clause was bad; that the entire system of zones was bad, and that the true system was a free market between landlord and tenant. At all events, now that they had it confessed, as the result of discussion, that one of the objects of the zone system was not to protect the remainder man, or the person under disability, but some other object, he had thought it would be a reasonable thing to attack the principle of sale through the Land Commission. But as the Government would not accept his Amendment, he had no desire to kill time, and he would withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Dr. THOMPSON (Monaghan, N.) moved as an Amendment—"In Clause 1, page 1, line 11, after 'holding,' insert 'whether subject to a judicial rent or not.'"

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 11, after the word 'holding' to insert the words 'whether subject to a judicial rent or not.'"

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. WYNDHAM pointed out that the Amendment of the hon. Member would not carry out the object he had in view, and, if accepted, would only make the Bill more cumbersome. He could not accept the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB said the Amendment he now proposed was to take out the words which limited the advance to £3,000 to any single purchaser. It was true the exceptions might be made under special circumstances, with the special sanction of the Treasury, but with those exceptions the advances were limited. Such limitation excluded all occupiers of agricultural land who paid £150 a year rent. He attached extraordinary importance to this Amendment. There was only a limited number of tenants in Ireland whose annual rent amounted to over £150, but all those second term tenants who paid £150 a year were to be excluded. The acceptance of his Amendment would not therefore involve any considerably large transaction, and it was desirable for several reasons. The big farmers of Ireland were the advanced pioneers of agricultural progress, and on that ground, in considering a measure of this kind, the State should favour them. They were a highly respectable body of men and the guardians of social order; and they were also the employers of labour and the purchasers of young stock from small occupiers. It was most important to the small occupiers that they should have a market for their young stock, because, although they were able to breed them, the carrying capacity of their land would not enable them to carry older stock than yearlings, which were not fit for the British market, and, therefore, it was most desirable that the large farmers should not be excluded from the benefits of the Bill. It was the more important that no one could say whether, under this Bill, the landlords would remain in Ireland or not; and, if they did not, it was extremely important that someone should be left to take their place. The exclusion of the large farmers from the operation of the Act would only lead to subdivision. In order to come within the limits of the Act a large farmer would subdivide with his son, and he, therefore, entreated his right hon. friend to agree to the omission of these words. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 12, to leave out from the word 'then' to the first 'the' in line 14."—(*Sir John Colomb.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN (Cork), who was very indistinctly heard, was understood to say that the exact proportions of this question had entirely escaped the attention of the hon. Member. The full advance of £5,000 would, on the ordinary calculation, enable the tenant to pay a rent of £146, and, in the case of a nominal reduction — even so moderate a reduction—a full advance of £5,000 would enable him to pay a rent of £200 a year. He did not think there were in Ireland more than 20,000 men who held more than £200, so that this Amendment represented only the interest of 20,000 out of 94,000 agricultural holders in Ireland, and those who were best able to take care of themselves; men whom the banks were only too happy to accommodate. But there was a much stronger argument against this Amendment, and that was that if these big graziers, who were not, as a rule, employers, were to purchase their holdings through the State, the last chance of carrying out what was the main object of this Bill would be lost. An Amendment appeared lower down dealing with the large tillage farmers, who were extensive employers and a blessing to the community, and in whose case some exception might be made, but as to the central portion of Ireland—Meath, West Meath, and part of Tipperary—the people there had not sufficient land, and the rich lands were in the hands of the big graziers, and if this Amendment were accepted a new system of landlords would be set up which would keep the people out of the land for ever. These graziers were not farmers in any sense of the word, and were not entitled to benefit by the Bill. He hoped, therefore, the right hon. Gentleman would have no hesitation in rejecting the Amendment.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB said the hon. Gentleman was obviously in favour of his Amendment, so far as the tillage farmers were concerned. He pointed out that these large grazing tracts were largely held under grazing agreements of eleven months. This Amendment largely concerned not only Ireland but England and Scotland as well. The agriculturists of England and Ireland relied entirely on Irish stock to work their farms. The stock they required was two or three years old stock, and they could not get it if this Amendment was not accepted, and the result would be the ruin of the Irish stock-breeding industry and of small holdings unable to keep young stock beyond yearlings. The grazing farms and big farms therefore had a large economic interest, and it was not so much for the personal interest of the farmers that he urged his Amendment.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said he did not know the view of the Government on this question, but he would suggest they should insert the words, "As amended by this Act," and leave the question of limits to be settled by a new clause. It might be of interest to the Committee to know how the limits got into the Bill at all. There were no limits put into the Act of 1885, their first appearance was in 1888, when the limit was placed at £3,000 to be extended to £5,000 if deemed desirable. That limit was inserted because there was only £5,000,000 to expend under the Act, and it was felt unfair to the small holders that large holders should be allowed to come in and swamp them. But they now had £100,000,000, or as much more as they wanted.

MR. WYNDHAM, who was indistinctly heard, said: I do not propose to enter into a discussion of graziers or large farmers, but I take exception to one part of the arguments of the hon. Member for South Tyrone—that in which he said we had £100,000,000, or as much more as we wished. That is a contention which governs, and which must be held to be governed by, what I said in introducing this Bill. There are many Members absent from the House now who were present on that occasion, but on that occasion I urged the House to accept this Bill largely by using financial arguments at very great length, and I laid great stress on certain features of the Bill which would put no rigid, but still certain, limits to the tax we might have to place on the credit capacity of this country. Among these I mentioned that the total amount advanced to any one person would not exceed under this Bill what was permitted under previous Acts—namely, £3,000 with a permissive extension to £5,000. I think it would be wrong on my part, at the very outset of our proceedings in Committee, to depart from the attitude I took up in consultation with my colleagues, and to which I intend to adhere—namely, that I would not accept Amendments which increased the pecuniary obligations of the general taxpayers. That would be the case with this Amendment, but under this Bill you will always be able to get the £5,000 limit in the case of a whole estate when it is desirable. If any difficulty arises over a large farm, rather than not sanction the sale of that farm, of course it will be the usual practice for the sale commissioners to sanction an advance up to the higher limit of £5,000. But then the hon. and gallant Member said more than that ought to be sanctioned because you will force the landlord to retain part of his property which he wishes to dispose of. That is not so. In the case of such a farm outside the concession, but not outside the estate, other arrangements would have to be made to get the additional £1,000 or £2,000. Even if I accept the Amendment it would not meet the difficulty as put by my hon. friend; therefore I must adhere to the limit provided in the Bill.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said that the decision of the Government not only dealt in advance with the case of the graziers, but killed the hope of all tenants of tillage holdings. As he read the Bill, no tenant with any hope of getting a reduction of 25 per cent. would be able to purchase under the Act, if his valuation was more than £95 or £96, so that the real effect of the Government's decision was to exclude from the purview of the Bill practically all tenants of over £100 valuation who expected to get any reasonable reduction of rent. In the case of Lord Lansdowne's estate it was the big men who led the agitation and induced the smaller men to act with them; and they were usually the most intelligent men on the estate. As the Bill was very complicated, it would need a good deal of explanation to make the twenty-five years purchase palatable to the small men; consequently the more the Government excluded the more intelligent of the larger tenants the more unworkable would they make the measure, and the less likely it would be to work smoothly. He was anxious to see the land question settled, even on the high terms of this Bill; it would pay the country to settle it on those terms, and that was why he should support the Amendment. As to the apprehensions which had been expressed about the graziers, by Sub-section 4, holdings on congested estates were excluded from the clause, and that might be construed to mean that the very men against whom the hon. Member for Cork protested, were to benefit by the Bill. The Government had announced a most serious decision, which would cut out Amendments dealing with the dairying and tillage men, and, while not affecting the graziers, would seriously hit the honest tillage farmers. He pressed the Government to retain an open mind on the matter.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.) thought the hon. Member for North Louth was mistaken in supposing that under the clause the limitation would not apply to the congested districts in the West. Vast tracts of grass land in Tipperary, King's County, Clare, and Roscommon would not be at all congested estates, although they might be within the limits of a congested county. But his purpose in rising was to urge the Government not to adopt any irreconcilable attitude on this question. The limitations required to be considerably increased in some directions and relaxed in others. They were not sufficient to secure that the grass lands, which were essential for the resettlement of the people and the rescue of the population of the West from a condition described by the Chief Secretary as worse than that of Hottentots or Kaffirs, should not pass into the hands of graziers. On the other hand, he entirely sympathised with the view of the hon. Member for North Louth, that tillage and mixed farms, which gave a great deal of employment, should not be excluded from the operation of the Act, and he appealed to the right hon. Gentleman not to insist on a decision which would shut out any future discussion of this interesting and most important point.

Colonel SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) regretted the Chief Secretary had taken so firm a stand with regard to a point on which all parties in Ireland were agreed. As the present landlords were disappearing as a class, it was very desirable that they should be replaced by men having amongst them people of substance with a considerable stake in the country. But they would be excluded by this decision. Never had a Bill started under such favourable auspices as the present; the Irish lions and lambs were smilingly waiting to be fed with the same food by the same hand; it would be very unfortunate if, at the very commencement of the proceedings, the Government adopted a *non possumus* attitude, declaring that under no circumstances would they allow any of these large farmers to become the owners of their land.

MR. LEAMY (Kildare, N.) expressed his surprise that the right hon. Gentleman should have taken up his present attitude at the commencement of the consideration of the Bill, seeing that, for the first time for a quarter of a century, landlords and tenants had come together with a most earnest desire to bring the fight to a conclusion. It was necessary to abolish the landlords, but nothing would be gained by abolishing landlords who afforded a great deal of employment, if large grazing tracts were to be left untouched. In the case of large farms, on which for years employment had been given, it was undoubtedly desirable that the farmers should be given facilities to come under the Act. He wished to know whether they would have an opportunity of discussing this point later on. He thought it was very unfair that at the outset they should be debarred from considering this question. If the Chief Secretary had made up his mind he might get up and tell them on which points he intended to stand firm. One of the Amendments put forward by the Convention was to bring in large mixed farms, and that was now to be swept aside by the decision of the Chief Secretary without any argument at all.

MR. JOHN REDMOND said he wished to make a suggestion to avoid coming into sharp conflict at this point in the discussion. The Amendment of the hon. and gallant Gentleman was of such a wide and far reaching character that it was impossible for Nationalist Members to vote for it. The Amendment standing in the name of the hon. Member for North Kildare expressed their view, and he suggested to the hon. and gallant Member that he should withdraw his Amendment, upon which there could not be that Irish unity which had been spoken of. It would not be possible to carry out the arrangement he had suggested unless the Chief Secretary accepted the Amendment standing in the name of the hon. Member for South Tyrone. It was a pity that the Chief Secretary on this most vital point had declared himself somewhat prematurely before he had heard the full arguments, and before they had had an opportunity of moving the well considered Amendments which stood on the Paper. By taking this course the Chief Secretary would not be doing anything undignified, and it would enable them, when they arrived at the proper time, to have a full discussion upon the real merits of this question. The right hon. Gentleman had not heard the whole of this case, and therefore it was most unfortunate that he had come to a decision. He did not think this proposal would very largely increase the pecuniary liabilities under the Bill. If the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite would for the present withdraw his Amendment, and if the right hon. Gentleman would accept the words of the hon. Member for South Tyrone, then this discussion could take place at the proper time. He presented this suggestion as a possible solution of the difficulty, in the earnest hope that it would be accepted, because it would be most unfortunate, if within the first hour of the debate, the Government came to an absolute decision without hearing the whole of the facts.

MR. WYNDHAM said that by accepting this suggestion they would be landing themselves into another difficulty. The policy proposed gave great liberty to one class of farmers, but he thought that many hon. Members would be violently opposed to drawing such a distinction, and the limit would have to be increased in respect of all farms under the Bill. He did not think he would be acting at all wisely if he set up another bone of contention between the parties who were now in substantial agreement. The hon. Member for Cork City had stated very definitely his opinion upon the subject of not giving greater facilities in the future than in the past, to those who farmed large grazing ranches. If he adopted the advice of the hon. and learned Member for Waterford he did not think he would be proposing a peaceable and almost unanimous solution, but he rather thought he would be precipitating a very keen debate from those who would not extend the limits in respect of grazing farms. As the hon. Member for Louth pointed out, grazing farms would already be excluded because, assuming that Sub-section A must stand, it dealt with the Land Law Acts which applied, but they would not apply to farms of more than £100 valuation It seemed to him that, underlying all the appeals which had been made, there was an impression that these farms were excluded by the refusal to advance more than £5,000, but that was not the case at all. If a farmer was ready to give £8,000 it was true he would borrow £5,000 on very easy terms from the State, and there ought to be no difficulty in arranging by way of mortgage for raising the extra £3,000. Hon. Members knew that at the present time very large sums of money had been given for these valuable farms in excess of £5,000. None of the arguments he had previously used could cover the ground of having to come to the taxpayer to lend money to people who were wealthier than the landlords. He knew a case in which one man was tenant of seventeen of those large farms and was conducting great monetary transactions. Therefore he could not ask hon. Members representing English constituencies to say that more than £5,000 should be advanced. When it was said that he was adopting an obstinate attitude, he asked hon. Members to consider how far the present provisions of the Bill went. The hon. Member for Louth said that if a tenant agreed to buy upon such terms as would give him a reduction of 25 per cent., he would be excluded from the benefits of this Bill supposing his rent was £200 a year. In such a case he would pay £75 a year, and £2,360 would be advanced. Under the existing law £5,000 could be advanced to facilitate the sale. With regard to the sale of estates, they might take it that the £5,000 limit would be available. In the sale of an estate the limit was £5,000, and not £3,000. In the case put forward by the hon. Member for Louth, £2,360 would be advanced, so that on that scale a £200 rental could be disposed of inside the limit of £5,000. He contemplated many cases in which farmers would be prepared to accept a much less reduction. Take the extreme case, the smallest reduction of 10 per cent., and even upon that a man with a farm worth £100 a year would get the whole of the money advanced by the State. If the tenant agreed to purchase, then it would be £90 instead of £100, and the general taxpayer would advance £2,832, and even that was inside the £3,000 limit. He hoped hon. Members would agree that he had not prematurely rejected this Amendment; on the contrary, he had considered it very carefully, and it would be inconsistent with what he had said if he were to hold out any hopes that he was prepared to extend this money limit, which he thought was large enough to embrace all the transactions which were likely to arise.

*Mr. HEMPHILL (Tyrone, N.) said he hoped the Chief Secretary would accede to the suggestion of the hon. Member for South Tyrone. He did not think there was any question upon this Bill more important than the one they were now discussing. By this proposal a great number of tenants would be excluded from the benefits of this measure. He was not speaking of grazing tenants, because if they held the land for only eleven months they did not come within the Act at all. A great number of large farmers had grass farms, and while the great inducement held out to Parliament to pass a comprehensive Act was to abolish dual ownership, by excluding that particular class of tenants they were leaving dual ownership in full force. That appeared to him to be an evil system. He could assure the Committee that great injustice would be wrought if there was not some relaxation of this limit of £3,000 or £5,000, as the case might be. He asked the Chief Secretary not to decide the question now. It had not been fully discussed, and materials had not been laid before the Committee to enable them to solve the problem. By adopting the suggestion of the hon. Member for South Tyrone, and adding the words, "as amended by this Bill," they would afterwards have full opportunity of considering where the line should be drawn. He would be very sorry indeed to have to vote against the Government at the first stage of the Bill, but he would have to do so unless some concession of this sort was made.

Mr. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.) said there was a large estate in Kildare, with which he was sure the Chief Secretary was acquainted, which would be more affected by his decision than almost any other property in Ireland. It was the Leinster estate, which was not composed of grass farms. The district consisted entirely of agricultural property, and if the right hon. Gentleman adhered to what he had said, that no amount greater than £5,000 should be advanced in any case, the largest employers of labour in Kildare would be absolutely shut out from the benefits of the Bill. He had no objection that the right hon. Gentleman should limit the amount in the case of grass farms, and even in the case of residential grass farms, but he did object to have large agricultural tenants paying more than £200 shut out from the benefits of the Bill—the men who in South Kildare were of the greatest good to the community. He supposed the Chief Secretary was aware that the agriculturists of South Kildare compared favourably not only with those in any other part of Ireland, but also with those of England and Scotland. In many cases their forefathers came from Scotland and introduced improved methods of agriculture. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would accept the suggestion of his friend the Member for North Kildare, and leave the question open.

MR. HARRINGTON (Dublin Harbour) expressed the hope that the Chief Secretary would take time to consider whether the limit stated in the Bill might not be increased to some extent. He was afraid that the right hon. Gentleman had not obtained full information as to all the districts of the country. In the eastern counties, Dublin, Louth, Wicklow, and portions of Meath and Kildare, the proposed limit would have the effect of restricting the operation of the Act to 100 acre farms. The men who occupied farms at a higher figure were those who were most useful, so far as the labouring class was concerned. The smaller farmer tilled the land with the assistance of his own children, and gave little employment except to his own family. The larger farmer employed a large number of people, and he was the very man whose presence in the community was most desirable. Of course the Chief Secretary said that man could buy his farm. He understood that one of the objects of the Bill was to prevent Irish tenant farmers from buying under conditions which would compel him to mortgage the land, but under the proposal in the Bill the purchasing tenant must mortgage the land to the landlord or some one who was prepared to lend him the money. How would that work? Suppose the case of a landlord who was desirous of selling the whole of his estate, and he found that he had to deal with men holding 100 acres or more who could not borrow the whole of the money under this Act. What would the landlord do if he wanted to sell the whole of his estate? He had only to arrange with the tenant as to the conditions on which he would sell. The tenant would still have the landlord as mortgagee. He appreciated the difficulty of dealing with this question, but still he thought if the right hon. Gentleman considered the question in all its bearings he would see that the limit in the Bill was considerably too low. It was most desirable that the holders of these farms of over 100 acres should not be excluded from the operation of the Act. He hoped the Chief Secretary would still see his way to make some modification of the proposed limit. He was sure that he spoke the feeling of the great body of the Irish people when he said that they considered the limit too small.

*MR. BUTCHER said it was unfortunate that the Chief Secretary should refuse to listen to the voice of united Ireland in this matter. The Committee were engaged at present in the operation of terminating the most pernicious system of dual ownership of land in Ireland. That was the professed object of the Bill, and yet they were going to make these large and important exceptions. Who were the men to whom they were going to deny the opportunity of taking advantage of the benefits of the Bill? Why, they were the men, as had been pointed out by the hon. Member for South Kildare, whom they ought to desire to benefit—men who in many cases were large employers, and who conducted operations on the land in an entirely satisfactory way. Was it wise or necessary to force the continuance of the existing system upon this large and important class of men? He ventured to think that if the Government insisted on the limitation they would in many cases stop the sale of the whole estate. Take the case of a man who had fifty tenants; four or five of whom were outside the limit. Was the landlord going to sell his estate to those tenants and have five separate occupiers in the middle of the estate who would still be tenants subject to the objections of dual ownership and of the rent-fixing system. In such a case the landlord would probably say: "If I cannot sell the whole of my estate, I will not sell any of it." In that way there would be a material diminution in the benefits to be derived from this Bill. He appreciated the position of the Chief Secretary, who said that he was bound to protect the interest of the British taxpayer, but there was really no risk in allowing these men to borrow. Were they not the very men who would be most certain to pay their instalments? By bringing these men within the benefits of the Bill they would satisfy the desires of practically the whole of the Irish representatives, while they would impose no real extra liability upon the British taxpayer at all. He hoped the Government would remove what otherwise would be a most serious objection to the measure.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) said that as the representative of one of the constituencies which would be chiefly affected if the Chief Secretary adhered to the position he had taken up, he desired to join in the protest which had been made against the limit proposed in the Bill. The Chief Secretary had warned the Committee by saying that he would not give way, no matter what might be said. He must say, for one, that that remark did not indicate the spirit in which he had hoped the Government would come to the discussion of the Amendments on the Paper. He was afraid if that spirit was maintained the result would be a different sort of discussion of the clauses of this Bill from what he himself personally would desire. The right hon. Gentleman had also said that he did not wish to plunge into a discussion as to the claims of large graziers and large tillage men, but he must be perfectly aware that there was an Amendment on the Paper, in the name of the hon. Member for North Kildare, which raised that question, and he was greatly mistaken if, notwithstanding what the right hon. Gentleman had said, that Amendment would not be proposed. The Amendment would be proposed and it would be supported by almost every Irish Member in the House. The reason the right hon. Gentleman had given for not acceding to the Amendment now before the Committee was really absurd and ridiculous. The right hon. Gentleman had represented that the change which would be made in the financial proposals of the Bill by the Amendment was one of vast magnitude and one calculated to justify Members in saying that the Government had broken faith with the British people. It would not be any financial change at all to let in the large farmers who used their land on a mixed system and who employed a lot of labour. That could easily be tested from the figures which the right hon. Gentleman himself had given to the House. This was not the time to discuss this question in detail, but it could be shown that if the Amendment were adopted it would add 10,000 to the number of purchasing tenants in Ireland. It was preposterous for the right hon. Gentleman to reject all Amendments of this character, because, forsooth, such an enormous additional risk would be placed on the shoulders of the British taxpayer! That excuse was ridiculous. On the other hand, if the right hon. Gentleman did not accede to the demand of the Irish Members on this question, some of his recent speeches in Ireland, and also in England, in regard to Ireland and the land question, would bear a very different construction in the future. The right hon. Gentleman had spoken in deprecatory language of the stream of emigration from Ireland, and had expressed the hope that that stream would soon be stopped; but by opposing the concession demanded by the Amendment he would increase that stream; because these large mixed farms would not continue to employ such large numbers of labourers as in the past if the advantages given to the small farmers were not also extended to them.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTSON thought it was very desirable that the Government should enlarge their scheme. He knew graziers who were as real *bonâ fide* farmers as the men who cultivated thirty or forty acres. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of his duty to the people of England, but as an English Member, and one interested in Ireland, he was certain that there was no one in England who had laid any stress on this question of £3,000 or £5,000. Nobody had thought about it at all. As the hon. and learned Member for York had pointed out, these 3,000 and 5,000 pounders were the best men to whom the English Government could lend their money. He presumed that what the right hon. Gentleman was thinking of was the bonus which would go to the landlord, but in the case of very large farms some kind of arrangement could be made for adjusting the difficulty. The hon. Member for Waterford had proposed that this question should be postponed. He agreed that a great deal had to be thought of yet, and the certainty of litigation was going to be a very serious hindrance to the working of the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman should leave a loop-hole for the reconsideration of the matter.

MR. EMMOTT (Oldham) said the right hon. Gentleman appeared to be afraid of breaking faith in any way with the British taxpayer in regard to this matter. The British taxpayer did not seem to be very much concerned about it. What the British taxpayer was interested in was to see this question settled; and anything more or less added to the loan and the bonus was not of enormous importance. What was of enormous importance, however, was that this Bill should be the means of settling the Irish land question, and that no portion of the loan should be repudiated. From the standpoint of the British taxpayer he had been very much struck by a remark made by the hon. and learned Member for Louth, viz., that some of the farmers who would be excluded by the £5,000 limit under the Bill as it at present stood, were most intelligent men, who would be leaders of opinion on the estates where they were tenants That was a matter of great importance. When such farmers found that the £5,000 limit would not be sufficient to allow of their farms being purchased, or that outside the £5,000 they would have to make arrangement, by no means so favourable as in the case of the farmer just below the £5,000 limit, that might possibly turn the balance and lead to the sale of that estate falling through. He suggested that the Amendment should be withdrawn in the meantime, and that this most essential point should be raised at a later stage, on an Amendment of which notice had been given by the hon. Member for South Tyrone.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) said that this was a matter on which the Irish Members were united. They did not wish the large farmers in Ireland to be excluded from the benefits of the Act. They knew the dire effect it would have on Ireland, and the heartburning it would produce. He had received many letters, some from gentlemen who were not of his own political Party, urging him to try and bring these large farmers within the purview of the Act. Why should the gentlemen farmers of Ireland, whose land was worth more than £5,000, be debarred from the purchase of their farms and from the joys of ownership? The right hon. the Chief Secretary would forgive him for saying that he had not been quite fair in, so early in the debate, bringing in the matter of the British taxpayer. The gentlemen farmers of Ireland were as honourable men as the gentlemen farmers of England or Scotland, and would fulfil their obligations to the very letter. The right hon. Gentleman knew how the ordinary tenant farmers had behaved. Out of 76,000 purchase transactions there had been only two bad debts; and it was not likely that the gentlemen farmers would be remiss in paying their debts. If this concession was not given to them there would be discontent. As to the British taxpayer, he did not stand to lose one farthing by the transaction, and when £250,000,000 had been given for the War in South Africa, why should they not have a few millions for Ireland? England overtaxed Ireland every year £2,500,000 beyond her proper due. The arguments which applied to other Land Acts did not apply to the present Bill. They were to relieve the poorest of the poor; but this Bill was to effect a pacification throughout Ireland, and to bring about a social revolution. Therefore any person who belonged to the tenant class should not be excluded. The Chief Secretary had not commenced the discussion in the conciliatory manner in which the Irish Members were determined to carry it on. He asked the right hon. Gentleman to have an open mind on the question, because he knew the discontent, the heartburning, and the disappointment which his declaration would produce.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.) said he did not think the attitude taken up by the Chief Secretary was at all in keeping with the attitude which he displayed on the Second Reading of the Bill. Knowing the evils of dual ownership, he would ask the right hon. Gentleman to consider the arguments put forward with such great force by the hon. Member for York. So far as Ulster was concerned, unless the Amendment was accepted the Act would not be operative over at least half of that province. In an estate of say 200 tenants, thirty would be over the limit. Was the landlord to sell to 170 tenants, and keep up his estate office, retain his agent and bailiffs to collect rent from the remaining thirty? In his opinion the clause would be fatal to the working of the Act in many districts. Clause 49 showed how important the Government regarded the mortgaging of farms in Ireland. It provided that a farmer should not be in a position to mortgage his holding after having purchased it without the consent of the Land Commission. But now the right hon. Gentleman stated in the debate that the only remedy for the large farmer was, in addition to mortgaging his farm to the Government, to borrow the balance required for purchase, from a bank or a money-lender. In his opinion, that would be fatal to the working of the Act so far as the large farmers were concerned, and it would prevent landlords selling to the smaller tenants. Further, the hon. and gallant Gentleman who moved the Amendment pointed out that the Bill as it stood would have the effect of sub-dividing holdings between father and son in order to enable the farmer to take advantage of the Act. He would ask the Chief Secretary if he could not accept the Amendment of the hon. and gallant Gentleman, to accept the Amendment suggested by the hon. Member for South Tyrone. If neither of the Amendments was accepted, he would be prepared to support the hon. and gallant Gentleman in the division Lobby.

MR. GORDON (Londonderry, S.) said he understood that the object of the Government was to get rid of dual ownership of land in Ireland, and as far as possible to bring peace and prosperity to that country. It was now, however, proposed to leave a certain quantity of land in the position it was at present. The point of view of the British taxpayer had been referred to, and he would ask the right hon. Gentleman to pause and consider what that was. If the Government were willing—and he for one was perfectly satisfied that they were right in taking that course—to advance money for the purchase of small holdings, and were satisfied that the money would be secured and would be repaid, then they ought to be doubly satisfied with reference to the money to be advanced for the purchase of larger holdings. He was most anxious that this Bill should put an end to the differences between landlord and tenant in Ireland; and if his hon. and gallant friend went to a division he would be prepared to support him.

MR. T. M. HEALY said that the Government could not have considered this matter with reference to Clause 17, which provided that where an estate was purchased by the Land Commission and tenants on the estate, to the extent of three-fourths in number and rateable value, had agreed to purchase their holdings, no proceedings to fix the fair rent of any holding on the estate should be taken. The one-fourth, therefore, would not be allowed to purchase, nor would they be allowed to have fair rents fixed. That was a position which the Government never intended to take up, and it was clear that some Amendment would have to be made. Unless the Irish Secretary was fettered by some invisible bond, and was obliged to take his sailing directions from a right hon. Gentleman who was not now present, he would suggest that the question be postponed. Did the right hon. Gentleman imagine that when all the Irish Members, the representatives of both landlords and tenants, were agreed, that the clause would be allowed to stand as it was in another place? Did the right hon. Gentleman wish that those large tenants would, for the first time in their lives, exclaim "Thank God we have a House of Lords"?

MR. COGHILL (Stoke-upon-Trent) said he was glad to hear the Chief Secretary talk about the British taxpayer, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would resist the Amendment which was being very strongly pressed upon him. He did not complain of hon. Gentlemen opposite; but it seemed to him that some hon. Gentlemen representing English constituencies had a very curious idea of how such constituencies should be treated. It was very hard to bring home to the British taxpayer the liability he was incurring; and he trusted that as the Bill proceeded in Committee, the British taxpayer would wake up to the burdens which he was taking upon his shoulders. He hoped that the Bill would emerge from Committee very considerably altered in the direction of limitations; and he trusted that on the present occasion the Chief Secretary would show himself firm and keep to the determination he had announced.

* MR. DUKE (Plymouth) said he did not at all agree with the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken. He thought the Chief Secretary might rest assured that as far as the British taxpayer was concerned, the only failure with which he would reproach the right hon. Gentleman would be the failure to make a settlement of this matter. They had gone a great deal too far already in reliance on the benefits which they hoped to purchase, even at the cost of some possible sacrifices, to shrink now from making an addition to the Bill which was agreed to by both parties, and which was necessary to make it symmetrical and satisfactory. The first essential of the Bill was that it should satisfy both parties in Ireland, and give a fair start to the regeneration of the agricultural population. That would satisfy the British taxpayer; but a great many hon. Members on that side of the House, if they found, on the Third Reading, that the measure was not likely to receive the assent of both the great parties in Ireland, would not hesitate to vote against it.

MR. TOMKINSON (Cheshire, Crewe) said he had had an opportunity of addressing his constituents on the Bill; and he found it was a matter on which they were prepared to act generously. Although it was true that the British taxpayer would become responsible for the whole of the purchase money, yet it was only the landlords' interest that was being purchased; and in a great many cases, especially in the case of a small holding, a great part of the property was the creation of the tenant. Therefore the amount for which the British taxpayer would be liable would in many cases be less than half the total value of the holding. That was an aspect of the case which he had put before his constituents, and they were quite satisfied that the security was good, and that the responsibility would not be by any means serious. The Amendment, if accepted, might enlarge the scope of the transaction by something like 20 per cent. But even if it did, he hoped the Chief Secretary, having regard to the great public object to be achieved, would not shrink from it.

MAJOR JAMESON (Clare, W.) said there was no greater argument in favour of the right hon. Gentleman, the Chief Secretary trying to meet both sides of the House than that used by the hon. Member for Stoke, who had pointed out to the Committee that there could be no risk. That was absolutely clear, and for the sake of the general harmony of the Committee he appealed to the right hon. Gentleman to give way on this point, which was not one that affected the principle of the Bill.

MR. WYNDHAM said the Committee certainly ought to arrive at some decision. He had given his ground for arriving at the decision he had, and if the hon. and gallant Gentleman pressed that matter to a division he would be obliged to vote against him. Personally he thought that was the proper course, but in the absence of the British taxpayer he would not perhaps be justified in taking a course which might preclude the question being considered on a future occasion. It was possible that it might be held that having passed the words in the Bill as they at present existed, any change would be of a monetary character, and that the question could not be reopened. Although he thought there was a good deal to be said for not drawing largely on the funds of those best circumstanced in Ireland, still he should allow that consideration to germinate in the minds of hon. Members opposite, and discuss the matter at a later stage of the Bill. That, however, could not be done except by the hon. and gallant Member withdrawing the Amendment, when they could put in the words of the hon. Member for South Tyrone "as amended by this Act."

MR. JOHN REDMOND congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on the suggestion he had just made, and pointed out that the hon. and gallant Member in withdrawing his Amendment would not be in any way prejudiced.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB said he should withdraw his Amendment with great pleasure. He would just like to say he was extremely glad the right hon. Gentleman had taken the course he had, and he hoped the debate which had taken place would have a good effect.

Amendment by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 13, after the word 'Acts' to insert the words 'as amended by this Act.'"—(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

Question, "That those words be there added," put, and agreed to.

MR. JOHN REDMOND said the Amendment he now proposed to move raised the most important question, in the opinion of the Irish Members, in Clause 1, and, in fact, the most important question in the whole Bill. It raised the question of zones of limitation. He was extremely glad he had been called upon to move this Amendment in the face of similar Amendments on the Paper, as it was necessary that there should be a clear-cut issue on which to take the decision of the House. The universal opinion on the tenant side in Ireland, an opinion which was largely shared by a certain class of landlords, was that the zone limits of this Bill were absurd and iniquitous. There were two limits. There was the limit on the minimum price and the limit on the maximum price which the tenant was called upon to pay before he could take advantage of the Bill. Take the minimum price first. Some Gentlemen were in favour of the abolition of both these limits, and one of the Amendments on the Paper before him proposed to abolish both, but the opinion of the tenants of Ireland was that so far as the limitation of the minimum reduction and the maximum price was concerned it ought to be retained. In the Bill it was fixed at 10 per cent., but the tenants thought that was too low, and that it ought to be raised from 10 to 25 per cent. It might be asked why not abolish these limits altogether and leave the law as it was at present? In the law as it stood there was no limitation, but, on the other hand, the duty was thrown on the Land Commission to hold an inquiry into the value of the land in order that they might be able to say that the price at which it was bought was not too high, and that the holding was a good security for the loan. In such a case there was no need of a limit. But this Bill was based on a different principle. This Bill was based on the theory that the value of the holding should be abolished, and that the Land Commission should be compelled to sanction the loan. In those circumstances it was almost necessary that there should be some limitation of the maximum price the tenant should pay, otherwise if he paid too large a price the security of the State would be impaired or destroyed. Therefore the convention of the tenants of Ireland advocated this limit. He therefore did not ask for its abolition, but a small enlargement of the limitation. But he saw no reason whatever for the other limitation. As the Bill stood, no tenant could purchase his holding unless he paid at least the minimum price mentioned in the Bill. Although landlord and tenant might agree to a price as fair and reasonable, it would not be possible to carry out the purchase unless the price complied with this limitation. Could it be seriously argued that under a so-called voluntary Bill the State should step in and upset bargains on the ground that the landlord was selling his land too cheaply? Irish landlords, by their ability, keen business instincts, and power of organisation and resistance, were well able to take care of themselves in this matter, and it was ludicrous to say in a voluntary Bill that the State must have power to step in and prevent a landlord selling his land at a price which he considered was fair and just. The restriction was not wanted for the protection of the State, because the lower the price the tenant paid the better the security of the State. Furthermore, not only was the restriction absurd, but it might work manifest and gross injustice.

Everybody knew that all over Ireland there were holdings which were not worth anything like twenty-two years' purchase of the second-term rents. That was admitted by the framers of the Bill, because they had provided that the limitation should not apply to congested districts or congested estates, which were defined as being estates on which one-half of the tenants were under a certain valuation. Scarcely an estate could be found on which there were not holdings so poor and small that a price of twenty-two years purchase would be an absurdity. Under the operation of the Bill either those holdings would be excluded from any proposed purchase, or the unfortunate tenants would be tempted into offering an extravagant price, with the result that the security of the State would be imperilled, if not destroyed, and the whole future of this question endangered. He had not heard a single sound argument in favour of the proposal from any point of view whatever. He had anticipated that the Chief Secretary's reply would have been that the Commissioners would put these holdings together and call them congested estates, but it was clear from his declaration that the right hon. Gentleman had no idea of the Commissioners holding one or two such holdings to be an estate within the meaning of the Bill. On the Chief Secretary's own admission, therefore, something would have to be inserted to protect these poor holdings. He had shown that this limitation was not in the interest of the State and the taxpayers, and that it was manifestly against the interest of the tenant and against common justice. Was it in the interest of the landlord? He could not conceive why the Irish landlords as a body had not joined heartily in the demand for the abolition of the limitation. The only defence of it that he had heard was a reference in passing by the Attorney-General for Ireland to the effect that it was necessary to protect the landlords from undue pressure to sell at a low price. Such an argument would not stand examination for a moment. If a landlord pleaded the provision of the Bill as a reason for not selling at, say, eighteen years purchase, the tenants would at once reply that under the Act of 1896 he could declare a reduction of his existing rents for the purpose of the sale, and thus come within the limitation. From that point of view, therefore, the limitation was absolutely worthless. But it had been argued that the abolition of the limitation would lead to renewed agitation and conflict between classes in Ireland. If he really believed that, it would have a serious influence on his mind, but he believed exactly the opposite. If the Government abolished the limit, and left the landlord and tenant free to bargain, there would be no undue interference, and the bargaining would go on amicably all over the country. But, if they retained the limit, the maximum reduction would inevitably be taken by the people as the minimum they ought to ask, and all over the country there would be an organised attempt to obtain that as the minimum reduction. He was convinced, therefore, that, in the interests of the landlords themselves, as well as of the peace of the country, and in order to destroy the chance of a renewal of class conflict, this limitation ought to be abolished.

Possibly it would be said that the tenants' representatives agreed to this at the Land Conference. The Report of that Conference was the result of a compromise. Each side gave up something for the sake of peace. The tenants' representatives originally proposed there should be a minimum but no maximum reduction, but in order to prevent the absolute breakdown of the meeting, and in return for concessions on other points, they gave way on this. For his own part, if the Chief Secretary had embodied the Conference Report in full in the Bill, he would have upheld it, and he believed the Irish tenantry would have accepted it ; but it was childish and not honest to pick out one portion, and, rejecting others, declare that the tenants had agreed to it and were bound by it. He certainly did not feel himself bound by one portion of the Report, when other portions which had been conceded by the other side in return were struck out. It was impossible to exaggerate the importance of this Amendment. If the Chief Secretary could see his way to make a concession on this point, there was no earthly doubt that on almost every other part of the Bill they would be able after argument to arrive at a satisfactory arrangement. But if the right hon. Gentleman adopted a *non possumus* attitude, he feared it would be beyond the power of the best friends of the Bill, and the policy it represented, to make the measure appear attractive or satisfactory to the people of Ireland. He felt most keenly upon this subject, and he asked the right hon. Gentleman to weigh carefully what he and others had said on various sides of the House. The fate of this Bill depended upon these discussions. He did not mean so much the passage of the Bill, because the right hon. Gentleman had the power to pass it in spite of anything they might say; but he was speaking more of what would happen in the future in regard to whether this Bill was going to provide a practical settlement of the Irish land question, and whether it was going to carry out the hopes cherished by them during the last few months, or whether it was going to be one more of the many failures of British statesmen to deal satisfactorily with this question. He earnestly commended the Amendment he had now the honour to move to the favourable consideration of the Committee.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 15, to leave out from the word 'advance,' to end of Sub-section (2), and insert the words 'provided that the purchase annuity payable under this Act will be, in the case of the purchase of a holding, subject to a judicial rent fixed or agreed to since the passing of the Act of 1896, not less than 15 per cent. below the existing rent, and, in the case of the purchase of a holding subject to a judicial rent fixed before that date or of a holding which is not subject to a judicial rent but the tenancy in which is one to which in the opinion of the Land Commission the Land Purchase Acts apply, not less than 25 per cent. below the existing rent.'"—(*Mr. John Redmond.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'or' in line 18, stand part of the clause."

MR. FLOWER (Bradford, W.) said he agreed with the hon. and learned Member for Waterford that upon the question of Amendments to Clause 1 depended, he would not say the whole future of the Bill, but undoubtedly to a very large extent its successful working in Ireland. They ought not to forget that this was a Bill to facilitate voluntary purchase in Ireland. The real force behind the Bill was that notable Conference in Dublin, which achieved the remarkable result of uniting the owners and the occupiers of the soil in Ireland. He joined with the hon. and learned Member for Waterford in regretting that the Government did not accept the terms drawn up in the Report of that Conference. In March last the Chief Secretary said that in view of the recommendations of the Conference Report and other recommendations from authoritative sources he was willing to provide that the landlord might make his own arrangement if they fell within the policy of the Bill. Hon. Gentlemen opposite had not complained that the provision in the Bill, which provided for a 10 per cent. reduction, had been raised to 15 per cent. The hon. Member wanted to know why they objected to sweeping away altogether the lower limit. He wished to know why landlord and tenant should not be allowed to agree for a lower price than the minimum in the Bill. A good many answers might be given to this point. The hon. and learned Member ought to consider something about the remainder man. He had been told that the great insurance companies in England had several million pounds invested in Irish securities. They knew how necessary it was to provide reasonable security against the undue depreciation of a huge amount of capital invested like that. They ought to prevent the limit for sacrificing his estate, and they should remember that under this Bill no notice whatever was given to the remainder man. One had to bear in mind the necessity of looking after the interests of the remainder man upon this question. He thought they did get roughly a Court of uniformity under this Bill, and they prevented the sum being made very much lower than others. If they had a great fluctuation between those annuities they might have fresh sources of discontent in Ireland. Those were some of the reasons which made these limitations necessary. As to whether the limitations proposed were the best he had some doubt. He believed the Conference terms were far more favourable to the landlords and the tenants than the terms under this Bill. He thought if the Government had risen to the full height of a great occasion this measure would have been far more satisfactory to the great bulk of the Irish people, and would certainly have worked without the slightest injury or danger to the English Exchequer, and would have been far more satisfactory than the measure they had before them.

People were apt to forget the difference between second-term and first-term rents. He would give the Committee the particulars of a farm in Ireland. The old rent was £150 a year. The first rent was fixed in 1881, and showed a 20 per cent. reduction, which reduced it virtually to £120. The second-term rent in 1896 gave a reduction of 18 per cent., which reduced the rental to about £100. Under this clause, if it is passed, the highest price the landowner could get was obtained by allowing the tenant a minimum reduction of 10 per cent on the second-term rent, and charging him at £90 for his annuity. That was in accordance with the terms of the Bill. The purchase money worked out at £2,832, and if they added to that sum 12 per cent. all round it made a total of £3,172, which, if invested at 3¼ per cent. would yield about the present income of the farm. This was about the most favourable case which could occur under Clause 1. The hon. and learned Member for Waterford would see that if this Bill was to be accepted in Ireland by the land-owning classes it must be framed in such a way as to induce those owners to sell who had not hitherto been willing to bring their estates into the market. The present Land Purchase Acts had come to a standstill, not from the unwillingness of the tenants to buy, but from the reluctance of the owners to part with their estates upon what they considered to be unfair terms. If this Bill was to be the great measure which they all hoped it would be, it must bring in those landlords who had hitherto stood aloof. He hoped the Chief Secretary would not lightly abandon the position he had taken up. He had not brought forward an argument which weighed with a large number of people, namely, that these limitations would prevent agitation or undue pressure being placed on tenants by organisations, or the landlords themselves. He was not inclined to think that was a contingency which, under present circumstances, was not likely to occur. He preferred to base his argument in favour of the retention of these limitations on the ground that they were essential to the satisfactory working of a voluntary Bill, and that without them they would not get co-operation between the occupying class and the landlords in Ireland, whose help in the working of the measure was essential to success.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL hoped the Committee would not complain if the debate upon this measure should occupy a little more time than they expected. He could assure the Committee that the debate on Clause 1 would go a long way towards settling the whole Bill. Everything else would be much simpler and much easier. He would have been glad of a Motion to leave out the clause and leave a free and open market as that market existed now under the Land Purchase Acts. But if the Bill was to be amended it must be amended on its own frame, and therefore they were shut up to a consideration of the Bill as it stood. The Chief Secretary had very properly referred to the difficulty of dealing with the subject, at least as regarded finance in the absence of the British taxpayer. The greater part of that afternoon they had had an Irish Parliament, and so far they had got on very well indeed. If the Chief Secretary was anxious about the British taxpayer a few moments ago in regard to the limit he would desire a much larger audience of the representatives of the British taxpayer on the present Amendment. These limits affected the State seriously, and they affected the tenant and the landlord. He had beside him a volume, not a very popular one, of the *Dublin Gazette*. People did not often look at it, but it contained a mass of information on this question well worth study. He took from the *Dublin Gazette* of April 3rd—so that it was not ancient history—a decision given by the Irish Land Commission on the application of the Protestant Bishop of Limerick, the right Rev. Dr. Bunbury, in regard to the sale of his estate. That estate consisted of nine holdings and the rent was £632, something like an average of £70 for each holding. This was not a piece of bog in any part of Ireland, but rich substantial land and rather large farms, as they would say in Ireland. The Bishop arranged for the sale of these nine holdings on his estate at eighteen years purchase and the result came to £11,444. The Land Commission sitting in Dublin refused to sanction the advance of £11,444 on the ground that the farms did not give adequate security for that advance. The minimum which the Bishop could receive under the Bill was twenty-two years purchase of these second-term rents—that was the worst that could happen to him—which would bring him £13,904. He could get, if the tenants agreed, twenty-eight years purchase, £17,696. The Land Commission refused to sanction £11,000 on the ground that these holdings were not security for that sum, but the minimum he could get under the Bill would be £13,000 and the maximum £17,000, and he would get his bonus in addition. Where was the British taxpayer now? He wanted hon. Members now to bristle up a bit. If the Chief Secretary was going to appeal to the British taxpayer, he wanted to know what earthly defence there was for a proposal of that kind.

Now he came to North Down. Lord Clanwilliam had an estate there. He had exercised the right which the Land Purchase Acts gave him to sell a single holding. The rent was £16 and the money to be advanced was £320. The Land Commission refused to sanction an advance on the ground that the security was not adequate. What would Lord Clanwilliam get under the Bill? The least would be £352. If the Land Commission felt itself unable to advance £320 on a single farm, how were they to meet the British taxpayer when, without any investigation whatever, they were compelled to pay at least £352 for that farm? He would take the Plummer estate in county Limerick, and he referred to the *Dublin Gazette* of June 5th. This estate was not a congested estate at all. He did not think there were many congested estates in that county. The landlord and the tenant agreed to sell and buy at a little over seventeen years purchase, and the purchase money was £15,961. The sanction of the Land Commission was refused on the ground that the security was inadequate. Would it be believed that under this Bill, without any inspection at all, the least this man would receive would be £17,908, and the highest would be £22,792, with the bonus in addition? He wanted the British taxpayer to take an interest in this matter. They were now coming to close quarters. Now was the time for his hon. friend the Member for Stoke to get his war paint on. He said that there could not be any possibility of defence for proposals of this kind. They could go over the *Dublin Gazette* and find case after case such as he had put now. These were not solitary cases. He asked the Chief Secretary a Question the other day. He asked how many applications had been refused since the Land Purchase Acts came into operation because the security was inadequate. Under the Acts of 1885 and 1888, 1,286 applications had been refused, involving £467,872, on the express ground that the security was inadequate, and under the Act of 1891, there were 789 refusals for £175,154, or in all, during the seventeen years the Acts had been in operation, 2,075 cases had been refused for the gross sum of £643,026.

The real truth of the matter was this, and the Committee had better realise it, that there had always been a danger of tenants in arrear with rent being pressed to give more than they ought to give for the land. Up to the present the British taxpayer had had a judicial inspection of the holding; he had got the report of the Land Commission as to the security being adequate; but that now vanished under Clause 1. The taxpayer had no defence whatever against the weakness of the tenant and the pressure of the landlord. He maintained that these limits opened up the gravest question which they would have to discuss. During the Second Reading of the debate the right hon. the Chief Secretary, when speaking of the question of the limits, said that the Land Conference was responsible for the suggestion. Now, that was not so. He entirely agreed with his hon. friend the Member for Waterford on that point. He would, however, give a little more in detail what the Land Conference actually proposed. He would not enter into the question of what the tenants' representatives desired. His hon. friend said that when the Conference met the tenants were in favour of a minimum reduction of 20 per cent. on the second-term rents; but that was not the finding of the Conference. A proposal was made by Lord Dunraven that the reduction on the second-term rents, or the fair equivalent, should be not less than 15 or more than 25 per cent., taking the reductions as in the Act of 1896. It was a curious thing that when that decision was quoted the last part of the sentence was invariably left out. The Government Bill was based on the idea of the Land Conference; that was on the idea of a limit, but it altered every figure, and wholly ignored the proposals for a decadal reduction. In altering 15 to 10 per cent. it lessened the security of the British taxpayer for the advance. That was the first difference made, and he repeated that if they had not the security of inspection they had nothing between the landlord's pressure and the tenant's weakness.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: What is landlord pressure?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said that where the tenant was in arrears and likely to be evicted pressure could be put upon him to purchase his holding at a price that he ought not to give; and the fact that more than 2,000 cases of proposed purchase were rejected by the Land Commission showed what the pressure was. The maximum reduction of the Conference was 25 per cent., but that was altered in the Bill to 30 per cent. Clearly it was imagined that that was to the advantage of the tenant; but how would it operate? The Government were extending the tenant's privileges and advantages, where in ninety cases out of 100 they would be of no use, because the majority of the tenants would not get more than a 20 or 25 per cent. reduction of second-term rents. Very few landlords, unless on uneconomic holdings, would sell at more than a 20 or 25 per cent. reduction, therefore the tenants had no advantage in increasing the Conference 25 per cent. to 30 per cent. They struck at the State assuredly in altering 15 to 10, and they struck at the tenant in altering 25 to 30. He maintained, therefore, that it was not fair to quote only one part of the Conference Report and leave the other out.

He came now to the question of ignoring the decadal reductions. Let them see how these operated. There were 80,000 second-term rents fixed. If one of these holdings were taken with a rent of £100, that rent was reduced in 1882 by 20 per cent. In 1897 the tenant again went into Court and had another 20 per cent. taken off the £80 rent, and that brought the rent down to £62 instead of £100. They commenced the purchase operation on a £62 rent, and suppose a tenant got a mean reduction of between 20 and 30 per cent. he would be in the position of paying an annuity for sixty years of £50 instead of £100. That man would be placed in a tolerably good position; but the Conference Report put him in a still better position, and with no loss either to the State, the landlord, or anybody else. The Conference Report proposed that a tenant at the end of ten years should get a 10 per cent. reduction, and at the expiration of a second term of ten years another reduction, and, at the expiration of a third term of ten years, a further reduction. All that was done by the Act of 1896. It had this enormous advantage; it was a great help to the tenants if bad times came, to have a lessening annuity to pay; and it was an enormous security to the State. Who had asked for the limits in the Bill? He had heard from the hon. Member for Bradford that day, for the first time, what he considered to be something like a real reason for these limits. The suggestion was that a limited owner, an owner who had very little interest in his estate, might sell at a low rate, and so set the price for the whole district, his object being to get hold of the bonus. He was not saying that that was not a good object; he thought it was very likely to happen. There were a whole lot of "scallywag" landlords in Ireland who would sell their holdings for half nothing, accept the bonus, and bolt with the proceeds. That was a thing which ought to be guarded against. But was not that a small object, indeed, compared with the price which the British taxpayer was going to pay? Beyond and above everything else, the Committee ought to devote its attention to these limits. Who asked for them? He challenged the Chief Secretary to show a single document from the Landowners' Convention—he had carefully read all their literature for years; he was impregnated with it—asking for a minimum price. He could perfectly understand that if this were a Bill for the compulsory sale of land, it would be absolutely necessary to put in a minimum price; but a minimum price in a voluntary Bill was a contradiction in terms.

The whole thing meant a system of preferential tariffs for the Irish landlords, and he objected to all preferential tariffs. He objected on another ground. The first limit of 10 per cent. or 15 per cent. Has not only defensible, but, when they had abolished the inspection of estates, it was absolutely necessary. Judicial rents were all very good, but they were not infallible; and it was little enough that the British taxpayer should have a 15 per cent. reduction before the advance was sanctioned. But there was no logical defence for the maximum reduction of 30 per cent. It was so absurd and outrageous that, if the British taxpayers were properly represented in this House, it would be impossible to carry such a proposal. They were told that the maximum reduction was to prevent pressure being put on the landlord. That was the suggestion of his right hon. friend the Attorney-General for Ireland. What pressure had been put upon the Irish landlords to sell during the seventeen years that the Land Purchase Acts had been in operation? He would prove that the pressure had been all the other way. The cases which had been refused showed that pressure had been put by the landlords on the tenants to agree to terms that could not be sanctioned. If no pressure were put on the landlords in time of war, when the landlord and the tenant never met except in a Land Court, or some other Court, and when his right hon. friend the Attorney-General never met the tenants except in a Crimes Court, how could pressure arise in the milleninum that had now arrived. The truth of the matter was that the tenants could not put pressure on the Irish landlords. The landlords were in possession of the soil, and the Bill was not compulsory. His right hon. friend the Attorney-General represented, as he himself did, an almost purely agricultural constituency. Did his right hon. friend anticipate that in any part of the North of Ireland any undue pressure would be put upon a landlord to sell his estate at a price at which he ought not to sell it. With a voluntary Bill the tenants could exercise no pressure whatever that he was aware of. Why should the Committee assume that the old war was going to break out again? Why should a limit be put in the Bill which meant, "Thus far you shall go and no farther." Above all, why should the same terms be exacted for an agricultural slum as would be exacted for good land. He held that the Irish landlord was doing uncommonly well, and did not need protection. He was getting an enormous price for his land, and a large bonus in addition. He would be materially aided in the cost of transfer, and he would get payment in cash instead of in depreciated stock. There was no logical defence for the maximum reduction; and he hoped the Government would be induced to withdraw it.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB said he sincerely hoped that his right hon. friend the Chief Secretary would not accept the

Amendment, or anything like it. The hon. Gentleman who had just spoken had only a very cursory knowledge of a great part of Ireland. He had no doubt scurried through other parts of the country.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said he represented an Irish constituency, which the hon. Gentleman did not.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB said he did not see the point of that observation. The hon. Gentleman, and also the hon. Member for Waterford, said it was not fair to take the Conference Report, the reason being that the Conference was composed of men representing a variety of conflicting interests, and that it was very difficult to arrive at any conclusion at all. But the Conference did arrive at a conclusion; and he maintained that the Government was, for the very same reasons entitled to adopt the principle in the Bill, because the same difficulty of arriving at a conclusion was equally great in this House. In expressing that hope, he echoed the universal demand of the Irish landlords that the Government should adhere to the zone principle. The hon. Member for South Tyrone spoke as if every landlord was a devil, and every tenant an angel. As a matter of fact, landlords and tenants were very much of a muchness in looking after their own interests. With reference to pressure being put on the landlords, did the hon. Member or the Committee never hear of groups of tenants, oftentimes under outside leadership, coming to the agent or the landlord, and saying, "We want to purchase, and we will only give you so much, and pay 4 per cent. on the purchase money." The pressure would be now still worse when the percentage was reduced. He entreated the Committee, when landlords were spoken of, to picture the great proportion of the landlords of Ireland as men who had by their own industry, or by the industry of their fathers or grandfathers, invested money earned in business in what they conceived to be the best security—the land of their own country. Those were the men who had to be considered; and it was mainly for their protection that the minimum and maximum reductions were required. The hon. Member for South Tyrone punctuated almost every sentence of his speech by a reference to the interests of the British taxpayer. It was a new thing to hear the hon. Member talk of the interests of anyone except a tenant. It was new zeal on his part to talk about the British taxpayer. The hon. Member referred to instances where landlord and tenants had agreed to sale and purchase, and in which the terms had been refused. He himself had in his mind a particular property, the landlord of which was driven to sell to the tenants, the tenants agreeing to pay seventeen and a half years purchase. Four years afterwards, the Land Commission honeycombed the agreement by allowing no tenant to pay more than sixteen years purchase, and some only paid twelve years purchase. One tenant who had agreed to pay seventeen and a half years purchase, after four years, had his price fixed at thirteen years purchase. His original rent was £17, and his annual instalment after purchase was only £9. He recently sold that holding for £250. In a case of that kind the interest of the State would have been sufficiently safeguarded had he purchased at twenty-one years on the original rent.

The hon. Member for South Tyrone had left out of the question the position of middlemen, the leaseholder, the encumbrancers, the mortgagee, and the remainder man, all of whom had to be considered. Were they going to make it mandatory on the Land Commissioners to agree to any price which the landlord and tenant chose to agree to, no matter how it extinguished the rights and interest of all others concerned. The hon. Member for South Tyrone had said he did not remember a single passage in the Report of the Convention which dealt with the maximum and minimum prices. That might be true in the letter but not in the spirit. Both the Landlords' Convention and the Tenants' Conference arrived at practically the same conclusion—that the landlord should receive so much cash as would yield him at 3 per cent. his former income, and that fixed the minimum price of the land at once. The universal opinion of the landlords of Ireland was that if the Government gave way on this question of zones the Bill would be wholly inoperative, and trouble would arise in the south and west of Ireland which would defeat the object they all had, which was to come to a compromise and settle the difficult and complicated question of the land in Ireland.

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN said that up to the present not one of the 101 representatives of Ireland had said one word against the Amendment. The objections to it had been confined to two Irish gentleman who represented English constituencies. The hon. and gallant Member assumed to speak for the universal opinion of Ireland, and laid stress on the fact that unless these limitations were preserved the result would be conflict with the tenant. Would there be no possibility of that conflict if these limitations were fixed? It was almost impossible to imagine why the landlords should object to the Amendment. The fact was that the retention of these limitations would be an incentive to, and would absolutely force, combination, and keep up the whole evil conflict and agitation in Ireland. If the Irish tenants were to be restrained within the limitations which would unquestionably worsen their position by two or three years purchase, the inevitable result would be that they would be driven to go for the highest maximum price the law laid down as a reduction, whereas if the Amendment were agreed to, and if the law only laid down the one standard of maximum price, anyone who knew the people and their present position knew that the tendency would be that they would be content with exceedingly little more than the maximum price laid down in the Act. In the great majority of cases there would be the strongest disinclination for anything like strife and conflict and the whole thing would be arranged on moderate terms. If the British taxpayers were anxious to keep out bad blood and agitation in Ireland, they would not hesitate a moment about giving up these limitations. The hon. and gallant Gentleman's attitude was part of the old vice of not trusting the people. No people in the world understood their own interests better than the Irish, and the moment fair terms were offered to them they would at once endeavour to get out of their horrible position and to improve their holdings, but if they were confined within these limitations their worst traits would be brought out, and they would be forced to fight for the greatest limitation. Everybody was agreed that the State could not be the gainer by the tenants paying excessive rents; on the contrary men who were seduced by this Bill to make an improvident bargain would be a burden and a danger by-and-bye to the State. The landlords who had got their money, and had got out of the partnership, might not care whether the Bill succeeded or not, but the State would have to deal with these men in future years, possibly years of severe distress or some terrible national calamity. There was no danger of general repudiation, but if the tenants were forced into improvident and impossible bargains the State might easily find honest poverty much more difficult to deal with than any conspiracy of repudiation. For the sake of the future peace of Ireland it was of the utmost importance these limitations should be removed. Under the Bill even the poorest tenants might be seduced into paying twenty-eight years purchase, and before ten years had elapsed they would be in a state of bankruptcy. Possibly not many would make so foolish a bargain, but why should the temptation be placed in their way?

Hon. Members could not realise what a powerful attraction the prospect of any reduction of rent was. Large bodies of tenants would risk anything to get some immediate relief, and the danger of these improvident bargains would apply principally to the poorest and most defenceless class of the community. The definition of the new congested estates would leave at least 100,000 of the poorest tenants in the country isolated and unprotected, to become victims of this minimum price. It was an extremely narrow definition, entirely depending on what the Estates Commissioners chose to consider as mountain or bog land, and in any case applying to a very small number of estates. In the richest parts of the country, side by side with the better-off tenants, would be a mass of these poor people; the weakest would go to the wall; they would have to do as their richer neighbours did, with the result that they would soon be in arrears, they would be sold up, and their farms would be grabbed. By excluding tenants on congested estates the Government themselves confessed that this minimum price was dangerous and indefensible. It would place a legal premium upon the creation of a new, and possibly more troublesome, Irish difficulty. As to the second portion of the Amendment they admitted that for the protection of the State, as well as of the tenant, it was as necessary to retain the minimum reduction as it was to abolish the minimum price. Unless that were done a minute inspection and valuation of over 300,000 holdings would have to be made, with the result that generations would probably pass before any general transfer of land was effected. While, with a view to the more expeditious working of the Bill, he recognised the necessity for this minimum reduction, he strongly urged that the existing minimum reduction of 15 or 20 per cent. would be totally inadequate for the protection either of the State or of the tenant. Experience had shown that the better off a man was the better the bargain he would make. The poorest men were almost certain to make the worst bargain the Bill would allow. In the matter of rent fixing, out of 330,000 judicial rents 140,000 were not fixed in Court at all, but were dictated in the rent office by the landlord or his agent, and submitted to by the tenant under the pressure of arrears or some other element of compulsion. The consequence was that Mr. Gladstone's Act, while it had done wonders for the better-off tenants, had done next to nothing in the way of a radical remedy for most of the poor tenants. The same thing had happened in the case of second-term rents. Of the 79,000 which had been fixed, about 34,000 were fixed, not in Court, but in the rent office. The result was that where tenants fought the thing out in Court they got reductions averaging 23 or 24 per cent., while the poor people who were wiled into so-called voluntary agreements got only 19 per cent., and in Connaught the reduction went as low as 16 per cent. Much the same thing would happen under this limitation. The poor people in arrears, desperately anxious for any relief, would be induced to make the worst bargain possible. The Bill would be the salvation of the landlords. As many of them as pleased would be enabled to remain, while to the remainder the Bill would give at least five more years purchase than they could obtain under the Ashbourne or Balfour Acts. He did not grudge them those generous terms so long as they did not insist on the tenants being two or three years purchase worse off than under the Ashbourne Acts. That was the crux of the whole situation. As the hon. Member for Bradford had stated, if the recommendations of the Land Conference had been adopted in their entirety, and the additional £8,000,000 bonus given, the Bill would have gone through without a single night's friction. The trouble was that a section of the landlords were attempting to use the advantage given them by this minimum price to extort from the tenants the £8,000,000 which the British Treasury refused to bear, and that, from the Irish point of view, was simply intolerable.

If the landlords were willing to accept the tremendous advantages they had been offered owing to the magnanimity of the tenants, which gave them at least five years additional purchase above what they could have got under the Ashbourne Acts, and if they were willing to accept from the tenants the prices which had ruled in the open market for the last twenty years, he thought the landlords would make a superb bargain. Beyond that he did not think the intelligent tenants in Ireland would go. Irish tenants had no interest whatsoever in bidding one pound more for their land than had been given in the open market for the last thirty years. The prospects of agriculture in Ireland had become gradually worse, and so had the prospects of the landlords until the Land Conference showed them the daylight. If once the magnificent terms now open to the landlords owing to the tenants' hearty desire for peace, were rejected, and if the Land Conference bargain should unhappily break down completely, the tenants would have no alternative but to return to their old methods, and then the landlords' interests would not again be a very saleable commodity. Those who honestly desired to be the friends of the landlords ought to bear that fact in mind. As to any attempt to inflate the price of the landlords' interest he agreed that the landlords had not tried to do that at the Conference, but if they did try to do it the tenants would have no alternative but to make efforts to restore the land market to its natural state. In justice to the landlords of Ireland he was bound to say that up to the present there had not been any considerable attempt in that direction, and he hoped there would not be. The whole question came to this—let the Irish people have the land substantially on the Ashbourne Acts terms, and then the whole trouble in Ireland would be over. He said that to-night with more confidence than ever, but he was bound to add that if the landlords were ill-advised and were not content with the splendid advantages that had been given, and with being at least five years purchase better off than under the Ashbourne Acts, if they insisted upon attempting to make the Irish tenants two or three years worse off than they would be under the Ashbourne Acts, or than they would be if this Act was not passed at all, then the thing would be certain to end badly both for the landlords and the tenants.

This Amendment represented the unanimous opinion of the people of Ireland, and of 100 out of 103 Irish representatives. Therefore in proposing this Amendment his hon. friend spoke in the interests, not only of the people of Ireland, but also of the vast mass of the British taxpayers. If the right hon. Gentleman would only put down his foot upon this question and say that he recognised that they ought not to fetter the tenants any more than they fettered the landlords, and if he would recognise that this wretched minimum price was only really demanded by one very small section of the Irish landlords, who did not love this Bill any more than they loved the Irish people, and who did not represent more than one-tenth of the Irish landlords; if the right hon. Gentleman in this matter would only yield to what was the unanimous opinion of Ireland and to what was in the interests of the British taxpayers who understood this question; if he would yield upon this question he agreed with the hon. Member for South Tyrone that the rest of the progress of this Bill would be a very smooth and easy matter, and he would lay the best foundation for the complete success of this Bill in Ireland by trusting the people and not putting upon them the almost intolerable disability which this clause would inflict.

MR. THOMAS SHAW (Hawick Burghs) said he did not think there could be any division of opinion upon the Opposition side of the House when they saw how this provision squared with the rights of the British taxpayers on the one hand, and the rights of the Irish tenantry on the other. It appeared to him to be a very strange proposition that His Majesty's Government should propose a hard and fast line in regard to the price for every variety of Irish land. That seemed to him to go to the very root of the entire situation. There were tracts of land in Ireland which any landlord or tenant in Ireland would say that to pay twenty-two years purchase of the present rental to acquire it would be a perfect outrage, and yet that was what was proposed as the minimum under this Bill. The hon. Member for Tyrone gave various illustrations, and two of them he would venture to repeat. He mentioned two cases, one from Limerick and one from County Down. In the Limerick case there was an agreement for a sale at eighteen years purchase, and the entire figure was £11,444. Under the scheme of this Bill if they insisted upon the minimum the sum total would be not £11,444, but £13,904. In this case four years purchase would be added by this Bill to what the landlord and tenant were willing to agree upon. In the County Down case £320 was agreed upon, or twenty years purchase, and under this Bill the sum would be £400, or, in other words, the figure would be raised from twenty to twenty-two years purchase. What he wanted to know was why should Parliament commit itself to a situation antagonistic to what landlords and tenants were willing to arrange between themselves? They had to consider the finances not merely from the point of view of the Irish tenant, but in this way, that unless the Irish tenant was put squarely upon the land and made to live under conditions of peace and contentment and comparative prosperity, to that extent the security of the British Exchequer was impaired. How did the British Exchequer stand? The two cases referred to showed eighteen years and sixteen years purchase, but the Land Commission declined to sanction that transaction, and why? Because they said there was not adequate security for the State. If there was not adequate security under the existing law to deal with these transactions; if there was not good security in eighteen and twenty years transactions to justify the Land Commission, what was there to justify the Government in imposing a minimum of twenty-two years purchase, thus impairing the security of the British Exchequer.

The right hon. Gentleman had said that the Irish tenants must be placed in a position to work out their own salvation. The people asked to have the Ashbourne terms, because these were the terms which had been arrived at after investigation by competent tribunals throughout Ireland. Was it exorbitant for the people to say, "Start us with the privileges we have been accustomed to in times past?" That was denied apparently on account of some superior force at the back of the proposal. The superior force was to operate so cruelly that this beneficent measure would be withdrawn from every class of tenantry unless they would pay more in order to take advantage of the Act than they would have to pay under private arrangement without the Act. He knew perfectly well what the land hunger was—how these men were driven to accept hard terms. He was glad to hear the expression of opinion that there would be a long continued attempt to make the best of these terms, however harsh, but the British Exchequer had got to be considered. They were to put these men in a financial situation in which they would be placed on a proper economic position, and in which they would be able to make a living and to work out their own destiny for a long period of years. If we started on a false and usurious basis we would find strained relations between the British Exchequer on the one hand and the tenant on the other, which he for one did not contemplate with much satisfaction. He put this to the Chief Secretary, it was not merely a settlement of terms here. Under this Bill there was no compulsion, but, if these terms were refused, and if the landlords of Ireland forced the tenants of Ireland to make a bargain so tight, then the tenantry would ask the assistance of this House to make the Bill a good deal tighter for the landlords than was expected. If terms were forced on them the tenants, too, might have the right in all the disturbed districts to use the weapon of the Land Commission which was now granted under Section 5 only to the owner, and to start by that operation a system of compulsion wherever a majority of the tenants on the estate demanded a settlement and that the peace in a particular quarter should be secured thereby. He saw, however, difficulty in the cardinal proposal of the Government. This proposal to make a hard and fast line seemed to him inconsistent with every interest involved. It was inconsistent with the land itself, which varied so much—which yielded only eight to ten years purchase in some districts and thirty years purchase in others. It was inconsistent with the tenants' claim that they should have their historical position under the Ashbourne Acts. It was inconsistent with the British Exchequer, because it was landing us in the position of financing a transaction which on voluntary lines, apart from this Bill, would never have been attempted by landlord or tenant. It was a matter for the taxpayers of the United Kingdom, and he for one, here and now, entered his definite protest against a financial scheme which would set a class of tenantry on their feet in Ireland in a tottering instead of a firm and settled position. He thought that the scheme of the Government, by drawing this line, was faulty and harsh, and that in the end it might prove injurious.

MR. MURPHY (Kerry, E.) said he wished to join in the appeal to remove the limits stated in the Bill. The working of the Land Purchase Act in County Kerry showed that a great danger would be obviated if these limits were removed and the tenants allowed to come to a fair and free bargain. As a young politician, he could not understand why the landlord section in the country should be allowed freedom to do as this Bill proposed, in regard to the sale of land, and to get a bonus for doing it, while the tenants, who had as much interest in the land, and whose future would be connected with it, should be limited between certain points. As had been pointed out by several speakers, the poorer class of tenants in certain districts were to a large extent dependent on the intelligence of the larger and better class. It would be easy for the larger class of tenants to give a larger price for their holdings, and it might be supposed that they, acting on the usual dictates of human nature, would be inclined to argue the poorer classes into bargains which, before many years were passed, they would have reason to regret. He knew some cases where purchases had taken place under the Ashbourne Acts, and where the tenants were now regretting their desire to become owners, because they had been induced to give prices for their holdings which rendered it hard for them to maintain themselves. He instanced the case of land on the estate of the Earl of Kenmare, all round the town of Killarney, where owing to different conditions they found different classes. Terms which would be quite reasonable and proper in one parish, where there was good land, would be quite unjust and unbearable in another where the land was mostly bog and moorland. The highest reduction obtainable under this Bill might be reasonable where there was good land, but it might be totally inadequate for the poorer holdings. The tenants were only too anxious to become owners of their holdings, and the Irish representatives would be slow to do anything to kill that honest and laudable desire. That desire, however, was so strong that they might be induced to enter into bargains which were unsuitable from every point of view. The Government ought to stand evenly between the landlords and tenants. There were landlords who might be inclined to enter into fair and reasonable bargains with their tenants, but there were others who would utilise the limits within the Bill to excuse themselves from entering into reasonable bargains, in the hope that the tenants would agree to small reductions in order that they might become owners of their holdings. He knew cases in Kerry where small farmers, side by side and similarly circumstanced, had to pay rents as widely different as it was possible to imagine.

And, it being half-past Seven of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

IRISH LAND BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:—

Another Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 15, to leave out from the word 'advance' to the end of sub-Section (2), and insert the words 'provided that the purchase annuity payable under this Act will be, in the case of the purchase of a holding, subject to a judicial rent fixed or agreed to since the passing of the Act of 1896, not less than 15 per cent. below the existing rent, and, in the case of the purchase of a holding subject to a judicial rent fixed before that date, or of a holding which is not subject to a judicial rent but the tenancy in which is one to which, in the opinion of the Land Commission, the Land Purchase Acts apply, not less than 25 per cent. below the existing rent.'"—(*Mr. John Redmond.*)

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'or,' in line 18, stand part of the Clause."

MR. MURPHY, continuing his speech, contended that whether this question was looked at from the larger or the smaller point of view these limitations ought not to be retained. On large estates the difference in the condition of the various tenants was enormous, and nobody but the tenants themselves could say what were fair terms. The landlords in Ireland had vast power, which could be exercised most successfully under the Bill as it at present stood, when dealing with the tenants who were not financial experts and who desired to become the owners of their holdings, to induce them to give a price without considering whether it was such a price as they could pay. Every argument which had been adduced showed the price fixed in this Bill was greater than the average rate that had been paid by the tenants under any previous Act. In the county of Kerry several purchases had taken place of estates equal to any in the country, and the highest price had never exceeded eighteen years purchase and the price had dropped as low as 12·9 years. Under the present Bill tenants would have to pay twenty-two years purchase, a most extravagant price compared with that paid by their neighbours, and that would result in a feeling of unrest which would culminate in another land agitation. It was desirable, therefore, that the maximum limit of reductions should be swept away. The minimum limit should be retained because the State must have some protection. If the maximum limit was removed the landlord would not be compelled to sell, whereas on the other hand the tenant would be able to say what price he was able to purchase at. This Bill dealt with the first-term, second-term, and ordinary tenants as if they were all the same class, but as a matter of fact they were very differently situated. He could not see the use of this limitation. Why not give the tenants the opportunity of deciding for themselves in the matter of these reductions? In the best interests of the government of the country it was desirable that the Government should commence to display to the Irish people some sign that they were willing to conciliate Irish feeling. This Bill was looked forward to with hope and impatience, and the Government should show that they desired to conciliate the Irish people. He was an extreme advocate of the tenants in this matter, and under the Bill the andlords were getting a good deal more than he would have given had he had the power, but the Irish Party had come to the conclusion that there ought to be some give and take in this matter, and they were willing to give up everything to secure peace for the Irish people, and if those were the signs of conciliation displayed by the extreme advocates of the tenants surely there should be similar signs of conciliation on the other side.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTSON (Hackney, S.) said every person in Ireland who wished to live in peace in Ireland would echo the sentiments of the hon. Member. The hon. Member was very much mistaken if he supposed that the landlords objected to the zones. He had not come across a single landlord who was not distinctly friendly to the Bill, but at the same time, he had not come across one who desired to get rid of the zones. It was desirable that they should be retained. With regard to each class of tenants receiving separate treatment he would point out that in all the recent legislation passed for Ireland, Ireland had been treated as a whole, and all these estates had been attempted to be placed on the same footing. It did not matter that one estate was particularly bad land, and another was good land—that had been taken into account in the fixing of the rent. If the 1881 Act had had any success at all it was because the land had been assessed at its real value, therefore the separate treatment of each individual estate seemed to be absolutely unnecessary. The Bill did not treat all estates equally. In the treatment of estates there was a very wide margin in this Bill between the 10 per cent. and the 30 per cent. reduction. Many landlords thought the limitation was too wide, but to say that the treatment of all estates in Ireland was the same was an entire mistake. The Amendment itself was divided into two separate parts; one portion increased the minimum reduction, and the other abolished the maximum reduction. In both cases the tenant was to be favoured. The tenant, in every case, was to be in the position of being able to say to the landlord, "You must give me this or that reduction." But the Committee must bear in mind, in considering this question, that the whole success of the Bill depended on the landlords working in friendly accord with the tenants. If the Bill was made so that it would not work, nothing would be got out of it. In considering this Bill he had never lost sight of the British taxpayer, who was, in settling this question, making an excellent bargain. The hon. Member for Plymouth had said that all that the people of England required was to see that this question was really settled.

It appeared to him that the taxpayer was perfectly safe. If he got the minimum reduction he got his consideration for the advance he was making. He got the security of the landlords' interest in the land, and he got the tenants' interests. Nobody suggested that the rents now fixed were the full rents of the holdings. It had never been suggested that the tenant could not let his holding for more than he was paying, and the difference between the amount paid and the rent at which the holding could be let, *plus* the landlords' interest, would be the State's security. In the working of this Bill he did not think this Amendment would affect an enormous number of holdings in Ireland. Bargains would not take place either at the maximum or the minimum, but at some intermediate point, and, therefore, in the bulk of the cases, it would be no use to the tenant to increase the maximum reduction. But what was clear on the part of the landlords was that a certain number of people who did not care about their property, and who would like to be relieved of it, might sell at a low rate and establish a kind of precedent, and that would be a dangerous thing.

In his opinion, the maximum reduction was no benefit to the landlord. He did not argue this matter from the point of view of the landlord alone, but from other points of view as well. From his own point of view he should prefer that the only sum mentioned in the Bill would be 10 per cent.; that the bargain should commence on that basis and be decreased downwards. The landlords of Ireland, as a whole, distinctly thought that the mention of 30 per cent. was an advantage to them. There was a much more important reason for retaining the zones. If they were once abandoned, the position between the landlords and the tenants would be so vague that he himself did not anticipate that they would come to any agreement at all. The great advantage of the zones was that they pointed to both landlords and tenants what the effective limit of their power was; it did not leave it perfectly indeterminate as to what was to be sold and bought. Again, under the Bill, as framed, the landlord and the tenant might settle the matter between them. The landlord might say, "I will give you 15 or 20 per cent.," and the tenant would say, "I agree." Now they knew that the Irish landlord was very seldom absolutely unencumbered; there were either mortgages or family charges, and in addition to that there were, in a large number of cases, reversionaries. In other words, the landlord was only a tenant for life. One of the great advantages of the Bill would be that these persons need not be consulted in negotiating the price. If the zones were destroyed altogether, and the maximum reduction taken away, it could not for one moment be said that the price to the tenant could be fixed in the absence of the mortgagee, or the chargee, or the remainder man. They would have to bring in all these persons to say whether or not they approved. It might be said, would not these persons have to come in at any rate? The answer was, No; because the reduction being a certain agreed sum, the mortgagee, chargee, and remainder man got all the benefit out of the property which could be got, and so the transaction could be completed without their presence. Another argument hinted at was what might be called the De Freyne Estate argument. That was, there might be a certain number of people who had no particular interest in the property not being sold at a very low rate; and while people on the estate would be benefited, the whole turmoil raised on the Dillon Estate would be repeated. It was not desirable to bring about that state of things. What was wanted was to make Ireland a comfortable place to live in, and he held that the Bill would not work well unless they brought it into conformity with the wishes of the landlord, as well as the wishes of the tenant.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) said he wished to make his protest once for all against the doctrine of a minimum price. His hon. friend who had just sat down had made the best defence of the minimum price during the discussion, but it was a very bad one at the best. The hon. Gentleman had a great interest in Ireland, and though his relations with the Irish people were of the best, he did not speak in the House with the power and force of an Irishman. He sat for an English constituency, and however great his experience of Irish questions might be, his sentiments on Irish questions were simply his own. He pointed out that no Irish Member had spoken a word in favour of the minimum price. There was a spectre at every feast, and the two learned Gentlemen who alone, at the moment, represented the Government on the Treasury Bench, were silent. He had seen it stated that the Irish law officers were in favour of a minimum price, and that if that doctrine were destroyed they would resign office. He would be really as much amazed if either of these learned Gentlemen resigned their situations as if an earthquake shook Primrose Hill. The Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General for Ireland made contradictory speeches and used contradictory arguments in favour of the minimum price. The Attorney-General had criminal combination on the brain, and he said that if there was not a minimum price there would be a criminal combination to reduce the price. The members of the Estate Commission could not join with the tenants in a criminal conspiracy to reduce the purchase money, or force an unfair bargain on the landlords. The right hon. and learned Gentleman had made a speech to the Commercial Unionists—what a delightful expression—and defended the minimum price exactly on the ground on which he assailed it. The hon. and learned Gentleman said that unless the minimum price was retained, there might be a spendthrift landlord anxious to get the bonus who would get rid of his estate at any price; and that the price he received would rule the market in the district. Why on earth should it not rule the market? Under the old system of the Ashbourne Acts the land itself was security for the repayment of the advances, whereas, by fixing a minimum price, the British taxpayer became the security. The landlords were to get independently of the minimum price £12,000,000, while they only got £3,000,000 sterling for carrying the Union, with a few peerages thrown in by way of consolation stakes. He wondered if the Chief Secretary had considered the case of the British public. They wished this Irish Land Question to be settled finally, once and for all; but the British public would not consider it settled if there was any sense of wrong on the part of the Irish tenant. He was no particular protector of the British Exchequer, but he believed that the British public who had given £250,000,000 for the South African War would give a few millions for the settlement of the Irish Question.

The leading objection to a minimum price was that it was utterly contrary to the principle of a voluntary Bill. The bonus to the landlords exceeded by 60 per cent. the compensation given wherel and was taken for railways, or other public improvements. Another objection to a minimum price was that while it inflated the price it diminished the security for the repayment of the advances. It would also prevent the landlord from settling the transaction in a way satisfactory to himself. Everyone knew what an enormous bait an immediate reduction of 20 per cent. would be to the tenant; but there might come changes—competition with America, a fall in markets, possibly preferential tariffs—and the tenant would find he was bound to his price for ever. That might lead not to independence and solvency, but to bankruptcy, and bankruptcy meant that the price must be paid by the British Government. He was not anxious for the British taxpayer, but for the Irish tenant; and he thought they should not bribe the tenant into making a bargain which he might bitterly repent of. He could not help thinking that fixing a minimum price was intended and designed, and whether intended and designed or not, it would have the effect of minimising the disparity between the tenant purchaser and the ordinary purchaser. He could prove that this Bill without the minimum price at all, embodied the landlords' proposal of last October as far as they could be embodied in a voluntary Bill. The Chief Secretary for Ireland had been constantly drawing comparisons between this measure and the Bill of last year. Could the Chief Secretary give them any voluntary Bill in which there was a restriction in favour of one party as regarded bargain and sale? The minimum price was suggested in the Act of 1891, but in that case the legitimate conditions of sale and purchase were invaded, and provision was made that a purchasing tenant could not obtain for the first five years an annuity less than twenty per cent. of his original rental. Of course the surplus would go to the Sinking Fund. From the year 1891 to 1896 purchase decreased, and the moment these irritating conditions ceased the purchase of land increased in Ireland until the South African War commenced. That showed that anything like a restriction in reference to the annuity to be paid restricted land purchase. He did not think it was fair between man and man to give to the 2,000 Irish landlords not merely £12,000,000 of money, but also by a legislative contrivance mulct the Irish tenants to the extent of a sum of £28,000,000 more. This was not fair either to the tenants or to the Irish landlords, because it made them the creatures of privilege, and was calculated to give a fallacious peace to Ireland, and would not settle the Irish question. The Ashbourne Acts should be left as they were, and the Irish landlords ought to be content with £12,000,000, cash down, which would enable them to pay off their mortgages with public funds and renew them at about half the rate of interest. Besides this, the landlords were getting five years purchase beyond the ordinary market price of the moment.

*MR. BUTCHER (York) said if anyone who had never read a line of this Bill had heard the speeches of hon. Members opposite, he would have come to the conclusion that this was a Bill to confer enormous benefit upon the landlords and no corresponding benefit upon the tenants. Nothing could be further from the truth. If a sale were carried out upon the most favourable possible terms the landlord would receive less than he would now; and if the sale was carried out on the terms most unfavourable to the tenant, he would have to pay less than at the present time. The second-term tenant was already paying 40 per cent. less than his original rent, but under this Bill he would get from 10 per cent. to 30 per cent. reduction upon his rent, and at the end of twenty-two years he would become the owner of the land. Was there any tenant in this country who would not gladly accept such terms? Even the hon. Member for South Tyrone was obliged to admit that the second-term tenant, who paid in purchase instalments 20 per cent. less than the second-term rent, was in an exceptionally favourable position. He asked the Committee to affirm that these limits were really necessary for the successful working of this Bill. The existence of a limit ensured the fixing of a price without delay and expense, and without the tedious and troublesome investigations which had to take place under former Acts. Under the former Acts it was open to the landlord to make any bargain he liked with the tenant, but it did not follow that that bargain was necessarily carried out, because it had to come before the Land Commission for sanction. He thought that was a very great disadvantage, because it meant delay and often a refusal to sanction sales which would otherwise have taken place. Again, although the landlord and tenant might have come to terms they had still to give notice to the other parties interested in the estates, with the result that the sale could not be sanctioned without enormous delay. It was one of the leading features of this Bill to avoid all that delay, and to ensure that when a price was fixed within the limits the sales should be carried through and sanctioned at once, and carried through automatically. In the majority of cases in Ireland, the man who was called the owner and who made the bargain was not the absolute owner at all but a strictly limited owner. Often there were mortgages on the estates, and unless they had the limits fixed in the Bill, it would be necessary to resort to the old procedure and give notice to the mortgagees and everyone else interested. One of the great advantages of this Act was that by ensuring a reasonable price within the limits laid down they ensured the sale being carried out without delay. The question had been asked why they did not adopt the procedure under the Ashbourne Acts? The answer was that there was no reason whatever why a landlord and tenant who desired to utilise the existing machinery should not do so. He had listened to the speech of the hon. Member for South Tyrone with the most profound dissatisfaction. The hon. Member had spoken about the number of years purchase, but that had nothing whatsoever to do with the question so far as the tenant was concerned. The question which affected the tenant was how much reduction he would get upon his present rent? It was most unfortunate that hon. Members professing to lead public opinion in Ireland should divert the tenant from the real question to a wholly erroneous and false issue as regarded the number of years purchase. The hon. Member for South Tyrone said that eighteen years purchase was enough.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said he did not say whether it was enough or not.

*MR. BUTCHER said he was afraid he did not understand the views of the hon. Member, but in another part of his speech the hon. Member admitted that a tenant who obtained a reduction of 20 per cent. on his second-term rent was in a favourable position. If a tenant purchased on these terms it would mean twenty-five years purchase for the landlord. He thought, therefore, he was justified in calling the hon. Member as a witness that twenty-five years purchase was a reasonable amount. He wished to point out that eighteen years purchase would mean a loss to the landlord of something like 42 per cent. of his income. The hon. Member for South Tyrone signed his name to a certain proposal in the Conference Report the very basis of which was that the landlord should get such a sum of money as if invested would bring him in 90 per cent. of his former income. He should like to know if the hon. Member still adhered to that view. The hon. Member appeared to suggest that the price might in some cases be too large, because there would be landlords' pressure on the one hand and tenants' weakness on the other; but he seemed to remember speeches of the hon. Member in former days the staple of which was not landlords' pressure, but tenants' tyranny. He was very sorry to have entered upon controversial channels, because he was extremely desirous that they should come to an amicable arrangement. [AN HON. MEMBER: You are not doing much to promote it.] But for his part he did not see where landlords' pressure was likely to come in; he thought pressure was rather likely to be exercised upon them than by them.

* MR. HEMPHILL regretted the line of argument adopted by the last speaker, and said the House had something more to deal with on the present occasion than the opinions or changes of opinion of individual Members. The clause with which this Amendment dealt was the keystone of the present Bill. The Bill purported to be a voluntary measure for transferring the land from the landlords to the tenants by voluntary agreement. For his part he believed that without the element of compulsion the effort would never be a complete success. But still it would go some way towards achieving that which they were all anxious on both sides of the House to see—viz., that the land question should once and for all be settled in Ireland. Hon. Members, of course, wished to deal fairly with both landlords and tenants, and they would naturally ask why, in a voluntary Bill, there should be what were called zones. Why should there be any restriction on the volition of the landlord and the tenant. He thought the hon. Member for the City of Waterford —the leader of the Irish Party—was to be congratulated on the moderation of his Amendment retaining the minimum reduction and the maximum price. Why did he retain these? In the interests of the tenants and in the interests of the Exchequer, it was necessary that there should be a maximum price fixed by Act of Parliament, because in the absence of any inquiry or investigation such as was made under the Ashbourne Acts, there would be no security that the tenant in his anxiety to become the purchaser might not undertake a burden which he was unable to discharge. That was the reason for pressing for the minimum reduction or maximum price at 15 per cent. in the case of second-term rents, and 25 per cent. in the case of other rents. Though it might operate harshly on the tenant it was only fair to the House of Commons and to the public because they must recollect that one of the peculiarities of the Irish tenant always had been his anxiety to get possession of the land. That led to the exorbitant rents which had originally necessitated Land Reform in Ireland, and unless there was some restriction that land hunger would lead to the tenant in his anxiety to become the owner, offering a price which,

his cooler moments, and when he came to farm the land, he would find was so high that he could not possibly pay it. Therefore, it was only right, although it might be inconsistent with the idea of voluntary purchase that the maximum price should be retained. He did not gather that any hon. Member who had spoken had objected much to that part of the argument, indeed the hon. and learned Member for York hardly touched upon it, although it was the very gist of the Amendment.

This was a subject which it was not easy for any but Irish Members fully to understand. He would like very much to impress upon the House how much the hearts of the Irish people were set on having this question put into a proper train for settlement. He well knew that if the Bill should pass in its present shape it would wholly fail in what he believed was the intention of the Government; it would, in fact, prove to be still-born. In his own constituency—North Tyrone—the tenant farmers were by no means enamoured of the Bill as it stood, and he had received many representations strongly urging him to object to the first clause. Indeed, he was not sure that he had authority to support the very moderate Amendment of the hon. Member for Waterford. It so happened that in that part of Ireland there had been, under the Ashbourne Acts, several estates sold at rates varying from sixteen to seventeen years purchase. These purchasers had all the benefits of the decadal reduction, and they were in a far better position than purchasers would be under this Bill, and the result would naturally be that would-be purchasers would realise the difference, and the object of passing this Bill would be altogether defeated. Care must be taken that the burden accepted by the tenant was not too heavy for him. As this Bill now stood without any provision for decadal reduction the tenant purchaser undertook for sixty-eight and a half years to pay a fixed immutable rent, immutable no matter how prices fell or how bad the times might be. He would have no means of escape from his obligation except by surrendering his holding. He should not, therefore, be allowed to agree to pay an extravagant price. He had the utmost respect for the landlords, but they could not expect, when their income was to come from gilt-edged securities, to get as much as they nominally did from their rents under the old system of landlord and tenant. They were to get a bonus as an inducement to sell, a bonus which would go into their own pockets, irrespective of the remainder man and encumbrances, and with which the tenants had no concern whatever. The great point was the capacity of the tenant to bear the burden for sixty-eight and a half years, and, seeing that the Irish Party had shown much moderation in this proposal, he should give it his hearty support. There was no similar limit imposed under the Ashbourne Acts and he failed to see any reason for introducing one here. If this clause were retained in its present form the Bill instead of being received with pleasure and satisfaction by the tenants of Ireland would only lay a new foundation for increased discontent and dissatisfaction with the policy of the British Parliament in dealing with the Irish land question.

*MR. DUKE regretted to hear the concluding words of the last speaker, for if the result of passing this measure was to be a recrudescence of the agitation which had existed for so many years in Ireland the British people would feel inclined to withdraw the consent they had given to it as a measure of conciliation. A very considerable cost was to be incurred under the Bill, and the electors of this country had only consented to bear it because they believed it would be a good thing for this country as well as for Ireland that a settlement of the land question should be brought about. But if at every stage in the discussion they were to be told that the Bill would not be accepted by one party to the bargain, they were not likely to go very far in the way of amicable discussion. Now he had no interest, direct or indirect, in Irish land, and he, like most English people, supported the measure on the ground that there had been a concordat between the landlords and tenants of Ireland. But it was complained that the Government were not carrying out that concordat in its entirety. He would like to point out that even if that were so the Government, on the other hand, had not released the landowners of Ireland from the most onerous clause of all and had not permitted them to make the best terms they could with their tenants irrespective of the interests of the State. The first governing condition of the operation of the Bill was that there should be compulsory loans of public money. The second governing condition of the Bill was that its operation should be automatic. If public money was to be compulsorily loaned to persons who made a certain class of agreements, that class of agreements must be defined. It was conceded on the other side that the agreement must be so defined that the landlord should not be able to impose upon the tenant such a rate of purchase as would extinguish the economic security of the State. What was the landlord to get in exchange? In order to placate the British taxpayer, the one party to the bargain agreed to the minimum of reduction, and, in return the other party conceded the maximum of reduction. If the mean of those limits of reduction was preserved in the Bill, it was impossible to say there had been a departure in spirit from the agreement arrived at in the Conference. If the alteration of the minimum from fifteen to ten was a possible advantage to the landlord, the shifting of the maximum from twenty-five to thirty was in favour of the tenant. The Amendment, however, proposed to retain the limit against the landlord, while abolishing that against the tenant.

Freedom of contract in the matter of Irish land had long passed away, and one of the objects of this Bill was to restore it. But this was not a question of freedom of contract: it was a question of fair dealing with the landlords, the great body of whom were not in favour of this maximum of reduction being withdrawn. That was a practical objection to the Amendment. It was said that if this provision were retained the tenant would be unable to negotiate freely with his landlord. But the very men who advanced that argument declared that the landlords had such control over their tenants that they would be able to compel the purchase of their land at the maximum price. If the landlords had that overwhelming influence over the tenants the absence of the upper limit would not matter, because the tenant, being at the mercy of his landlord, would be compelled to buy at the minimum reduction. On the other hand, it was said that the maximum of reduction would operate as the minimum on which the tenants would insist. Would not the striking out of the maximum reduction be taken as a tacit assertion on the part of the Government that the minimum of price was too high, and that the limits of the bargain ought to be outside those now proposed? Again, would it be a fair thing in the case of settled lands to omit the maximum of reduction? The fact could not be lost sight of that, for the sake of public peace, an astounding bonus was being offered to a large class of persons in Ireland to induce them, in many cases against their will, to sell property which was only partly theirs. If in any other country than Ireland such a proposition were made, capped with the promise that the transaction should be carried through compulsorily, and no questions be asked, it would be characterised as a monstrous inducement to acts of commercial immorality. It was now said by the other side that the landlords were proof against such a temptation. They were not so credited in all quarters. The hon. Member for South Tyrone had said there were among the Irish landlords a lot of "scallywags" who, for the sake of such a bonus, would sell the land of which they were the tenants for life at any price that could be got. Was it possible for the State to leave the matter in that condition?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said he expressly stated that that ought to be provided for. His contention was that the price by which it was to be provided for was excessive.

*MR. DUKE was afraid that if the question was discussed purely from the pounds, shillings, and pence point of view, as a hard commercial transaction, this Bill would not go much farther. It was notorious, however, that they were not considering this matter on the doctrines of Adam Smith, or seeking to drive the hardest bargain that could be arranged; but the same measure must be applied all round The Chief Secretary in his Second Reading speech instanced the case of a large estate in the West of Ireland, the life owner of which for eleven months in the year was an inmate of the workhouse. Would Parliament offer a bonus of 10 per cent. upon the purchase price of a considerable property and give it to that gentleman without inquiry as to the incumbrances on that estate? It would be impossible. Then there was the case of a man of sixty or seventy years of age, with an encumbered estate worth £50,000 or £100,000, of which the greater part of the beneficial interest was obviously in the remainder-man. Was it fair to offer that man £5,000 or £10,000 to induce him to come to terms with his tenants, and leave the remainder-man to shift for himself? The policy of the Bill was to avoid the necessity for elaborate investigation, in order that the operation of the Bill should be automatic. It was therefore essential in order to guard against such dangers as he had suggested to have such limits as those proposed in the Bill. He was told though, and he fully believed, that in the case of estates where there were no judicial rents, and where there were isolated holdings not held on economic terms, the Bill would have an unintended operation. Those were the exceptional cases no doubt, but there could be little doubt that they existed in large numbers, and ought to be dealt with. The Land Conference agreed that there were certain limits within which the operation of the Bill might be treated as normal, and the State might safely make the advances proposed, and under which the remainder men would be fairly dealt with. While it was essential that those limits should be retained, he hoped the Bill would not be marred by the exceptional cases to which he had referred being left unprovided for. The view of the Government was that these limits were of the essence of the Bill. He suggested as a compromise that while those limits were retained where the operation of the Bill would be compulsory, some means should be provided for dealing with the exceptional cases. But it had to be borne in mind that the Bill had been so drawn that its operation wholly depended upon the mutual effect of its several parts, and unless the limits which were here in question were retained he did not see how the Chief Secretary's scheme could be carried into effect.

*DR. THOMPSON said he had taken a great interest in the land question for many years, and had discussed this question with many people, but he had never met a tenant who gave much consideration to the number of years purchase. What the tenant considered of importance was the amount he would get back on purchase and the number of years he would have to pay his rent, though this was a minor consideration. The tenant would not mind how many years purchase the landlord was given provided he himself got 6s. or 7s. in the £ reduction on his first-term rent. As to the matter before the Committee, surely some compromise would be possible if exceptional cases were referred to the Land Commission for settlement.

MR. EMMOTT (Oldham) contended that the limits suggested in the Bill were not likely to work out satisfactorily. While he deprecated comparisons of the benefit landlords and tenants respectively were likely to secure under the Bill, he asked whether it was not the fact that the tenants who had bought during the last five years had in most cases done better than they could possibly do under the present proposals, and that the landlords would have enormously improved their position by waiting? On the point of the necessity of these zone limits, the Commissioners would be unable to refuse the ratification of a bargain provided it came within the limits of the Bill, and possibly tenants who were in arrears with their rent would be compelled to accept a 10 per cent. reduction for fear of being turned out of their holdings. In the interesting report of Mr. Bailey, attention was called to the one class of cases in which purchase had been unsatisfactory—the cases in which tenants had had insufficient capital. Such tenants, being in arrears, might be forced to make a 10 per cent. bargain, and they would be in the position of impoverished occupying owners, likely to fail. If many tenants were to be placed in that position there would be a danger of a serious breakdown. The interest of the general taxpayer was that there should be safety, that the price should be reasonable, that the two parties should bargain on equal terms. He preferred that the minimum reduction put down at 10 per cent. should be made 15 per cent. With regard to the side of the landlord he asked, did it seem to be an unfair bargain for the landlord? Upon that point he was short of information. What instances were there of recent years where such a bargain would have been passed by the Land Commission? On the other hand they had been told of many cases where such a bargain, or even more favourable bargains, had been refused by the Land Commission. In reference to the maximum reduction he thought there ought to be no barrier to a free bargain. Many recent bargains allowed a reduction of more than thirty per cent. In face of this fact why should a greater reduction than thirty per cent. on second-term rents be debarred. Looking at it from the standpoint of the general taxpayer, he thought there should be no limit to the reduction made on a fair bargain between landlord and tenant. Take the position of the landlord, for it was no use passing a voluntary Bill unless the terms were fair. What would the landlord get? The landlord would get in hard cash under this Bill, by the intervention of State credit, five years' more purchase at least than anything he had ever got before; and by the lower rate of interest and the increased number of years for repayment the landlord got an extra five years' purchase above what he would have got at the present time. Take a case where the rental was £100. Under the old conditions the advance would have been £2,500.

MR. WYNDHAM: Yes, if it had been agreed.

MR. EMMOTT said the landlord would get in this case between £3,000 and £3,100. That was the difference between 4 per cent. under the old Act and the 3¼ per cent. interest he would have to pay under this Act.

MR. WYNDHAM: When my hon. friend takes £100 as the amount it is difficult to follow. I would suggest that he should take £80.

MR. EMMOTT said he would call the old rent £100 and the new rent £80, and that would represent an advance of £2,000. Under the new Act upon a 3¼ per cent. basis that would allow of an advance of something like £2,500. Therefore the landlord got five or six years' extra rent in cash over what he would get under the old Act. Under these circumstances he thought the landlord as well as the tenant was getting a fair inducement even if the maximum reduction were struck out of the Bill. Looking at the matter from the standpoint of the general taxpayer, and having regard also to the position of the landlord, he supported the Amendment.

*MR. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.) said the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth generally spoke from behind the Front Bench, and judging from the promptings he received he imagined that the Front Bench supplied him with his facts and figures.

*MR. DUKE denied that he had received any promptings from the Front Bench. The Chief Secretary had been good enough to communicate with him through an hon. friend sitting near him to ask what precisely an Amendment which he had set down meant, and he had endeavoured to explain what he thought the Amendment meant. Beyond that he had had no communication with the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.) said that according to the hon. and learned Gentleman's argument it would appear that a great boon was being conferred upon the tenant. If they judged this measure from past experience in Ireland it could be shown that this Bill was a great boon to the landlords, and one which they ought to be very ready to accept. The hon. and gallant Member below the gangway had spoken on behalf of the landlords in a manner which showed that his great affection for the tenant farmers of Ireland was to get as much as he could out of their pockets for the benefit of the landlords. The arguments of the hon. and gallant Member for Yarmouth had been met in a friendly and conciliatory manner, but the hon. and learned Member for York had imparted a bit of that spirit of hostility which was behind the remarks of a great many gentlemen like him, who spoke on behalf of the landlords. He did not wish to introduce anything bitter into this discussion, but when the hon. and learned Member opposite spoke of the tyranny of the past, and ridiculed the idea that landlords could put pressure upon the tenants, all he could say was that he remembered the first occasion when the hon. and learned Member came over to Ireland—when they were having a big fight with the landlords—as the political emergency man, and he went on behalf of the Crown to give evidence against his fellow Nationalists. That was the hon. Gentleman who now imputed petty tyranny to Irish Nationalists. The hon. Member for York spoke of the facilities given for the sale of estates, and said this would be a great saving to the tenant. On the contrary, those facilities, instead of being a benefit to the tenant, were altogether a benefit to the landlord. The hon. Member said that they ought not to deal with the number of years purchase, but this was distinctly a question of purchase, because it was on the basis of the number of years purchase that all the sales had proceeded up to the present time. Hon. Members who thought that this was not so were making a very serious mistake. In his own constituency a great number of sales had taken place, and from the first year after the passing of the Purchase Acts up till last year the highest number of years purchase obtained had been nineteen, and some of them had been as low as fifteen years. In 1902 a number of sales took place, and the average was 17·4 years purchase. He thought those tenants who had not purchased in his own constituency would find it very hard that under this Bill they would be expected to pay twenty-two years purchase when their neighbours had bought at from fifteen to nineteen years purchase. This Bill with Clause 1 was not at all the great boon which hon. Members tried to dangle before the eyes of the tenant. With regard to the argument that landlords could not put on pressure he would point out that for years past Irish land lords had been working to deprive the tenants of a great many of their privileges. He had known of landlords who had gradually been depriving their tenants of certain privileges which they had hitherto enjoyed in order to gain by purchase. In his own locality a landlord offered to sell at twenty-two and a half years purchase to his tenants who were paying exorbitant rents, and in order to get out of their arrears the landlord induced them to buy at twenty-two and a half years purchase. When the Land Commission sent down a representative they distinctly refused to advance the money at such an exorbitant rate. If the Land Commission refused to sanction twenty-two and a half years purchase how was it that the Government were now fixing twenty-two years purchase as the lowest price? He thought it was most unfair and unreasonable that this reservation should be in the Bill at all.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.) said this Amendment asked the Committee to give the tenants of Ireland a free market, and not bind them to a minimum or a maximum price, but leave them in a position to make their purchase agreement in a free market. What good was it to a tenant farmer to be able to purchase his holding with the prospect of having only a 10 per cent. reduction of his rent for a series of sixty-eight and-a-half years. It would be madness for an Irish tenant farmer to make such a bargain, and they would get very few Irish farmers to avail themselves of this provision if they were tied down to a 10 per cent. reduction.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB: They are not tied down.

MR. FARRELL said he was afraid that his hon. and gallant friend did not quite understand the provisions of the Bill. The 10 per cent. limit would not be put there if it was not intended to affect the position of the tenants. He should like to know if the Chief Secretary had studied the interesting tabular statement which had appeared in the *Freeman's Journal*, giving the whole figures for voluntary purchase in Ireland for the last seventeen years. The statement showed that in the county of Longford the purchase agreements for the last seventeen years averaged between 12·5 and 17·5 years purchase. How had the second-term rents been fixed? A storm of indignation was arising amongst Irish tenant farmers at the way in which a regular conspiracy amongst the Land Commissioners had arisen, for they appeared to have resolved not to give reductions on the first-term rents, and in certain cases they had increased the second-term rents. He was expressing his own honest conviction upon this subject as the representative of a body of tenant farmers, very many of whom had purchased upon the terms he had mentioned, namely, between twelve years and seventeen years purchase. If they kept this restriction in the Bill, of a 10 per cent. minimum and a 30 per cent. maximum reduction, they would be taking the surest way of rendering this Bill practically inoperative. The Chief Secretary said in the debate on the Second Reading of the Bill that it was hoped that this would finally settle the Irish land question. The British House of Commons had been tinkering at the question during the past fifty years. Nobody would be more glad than himself to see the right hon. Gentleman having the credit of finally and satisfactorily settling the land question, but if he listened to the bad advice he received from Irish landlords representing English constituencies, who sat behind him, he would never settle the question. The Bill as it stood contained clauses which were retrogressive as to their effect even on the existing land legislation, but no clause was more absolutely repugnant to the ordinary tenant of the country than Clause 1, which as it stood practically gave compulsory powers to bind the tenant with respect to the price he was to pay for the land. Let them look beyond the present. It might be that agriculture was paying better this year than it did some years ago, or than it would do in the future. Foreign competition was daily increasing, and he did not think there was any prospect of the Imperial Zollverein materialising as some gentlemen fondly hoped. Perhaps it would do Ireland no harm if it did. It had been suggested that by a system of motor-cars farm produce would be brought quickly to the markets in future. He did not know how far that would materialise, but he hoped it would do some good. He had no great faith in it personally. He thought the Chief Secretary could not complain that any member of the Irish Party, whether leader or humble ranker, had done anything to thwart his design or to meet his policy in a spirit of nagging, but there were certain conditions which they could not accept the responsibility of seeing passed into law without protest. He warned the right hon. Gentleman that if he persisted in giving effect to them a great deal of his labour would be in vain.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) said it had been shown in many speeches that under the operation of the existing Land Purchase Laws, tenants had been able to buy at a much lower figure than they would have been able to do under this Bill. The hon. Member for North Longford had shown that in his own constituency twelve to seventeen years purchase was given by a number of tenants for their land. Of course, all were agreed that if these terms could be generally applied to Ireland they would be better than the terms offered by this Bill, but unfortunately they knew too well that the process of sale and purchase in Ireland under the existing Purchase Acts had pretty well come to a standstill. The position they were in was that if they were to induce the landlords to sell they must offer terms considerably in advance of those which had hitherto prevailed, and it was altogether a question for the tenants themselves to consider whether in order to obtain the sanction of their landlords for purchase they were prepared to give something in excess of the prices which had hitherto prevailed. The question how much more should be given was one which the tenants would be perfectly free to decide for themselves under the provisions of this Bill, but the Amendment which was at present before the Committee dealt with a particular point which was very justly regarded as one of the most important in the Bill, namely, the proposal that under no circumstances whatever could the tenants obtain more than a certain reduction of the instalments in the purchase transaction. The hon. Member for Oldham had pointed out with perfect truth that under the existing Purchase Acts many of the tenants had obtained for themselves terms equal to a great deal more than a 30 per cent. reduction upon the rents they had hitherto paid, and there could be no doubt whatever that there were a certain number of tenants who would, because of the nature of their holdings, be justly entitled to receive a settlement which would be more to them than 30 per cent. on the rents they were paying at the present time. He was perfectly satisfied that, taking into consideration the bonus which was to be provided by the Government under this Bill, many of the landlords—he did not say the whole or anything like the whole of them—would be quite prepared to make settlements with their tenants upon terms which would mean more to the tenants than the 30 per cent. maximum reduction provided by the Bill. Could it possibly be argued that in a case where landlord and tenant were perfectly willing to come to terms which would mean more than 30 per cent. reduction of rent, it was not perfectly reasonable that they should be allowed to do so?

It might be said that in a great many cases in Ireland a reduction of 30 per cent. would not be reached, but the Chief Secretary knew that in some parts of the country where the land was not so rich there were cases where it would not be unreasonable for tenants to expect, on a final settlement such as everybody hoped this would be, to receive more than the 30 per cent. which was allowed by the Bill. Why in the name of common sense should a hard and fast line be drawn in this Bill which would have the effect of preventing a settlement in cases where the landlord would very likely be glad to come to an arrangement which would mean more than 30 per cent. reduction to the tenants? It was the desire of all parties in Ireland that the settlement under this Bill should be of a satisfactory and permanent character. As far as he was personally concerned, he could tell the Chief Secretary without the slightest hesitation that he would be extremely sorry to see a single estate sold or purchased in Ireland upon terms which were not in themselves likely to stand well the test of time, and to be, as far as one could humanly judge, permanent and satisfactory to the tenants who bought. What was there sacred or magical about the figure 30 in regard to the reduction which the tenant might hope to obtain? Why 30, instead of 31, or 29, or some other figure? There was no argument by which this hard and fast rule could be justified. He asked the Chief Secretary to look at it from a reasonable point of view, and to realise that there must be numbers of the most deserving people excluded from the operation of the Bill if this hard and fast rule was made. It had been said that this particular zone had been agreed to by the landlords and tenants in conference, but it was only one item in a general agreement. He thought it was unreasonable and unfair to expect the representatives of the tenants to accept one particular portion of the Report to which they agreed, when it was admitted that other portions of the Report had been repudiated by the representatives of the landlords and by the Government. He had been asked over and over again why this particular figure of 30 per cent. had been adhered to by the Government, and he had never been able to answer the question. He would look forward with the greatest interest to the explanation of the Chief Secretary why this particular figure had been chosen. He was perfectly convinced that if the right hon. Gentleman maintained this figure the Bill would not provide a satisfactory or permanent settlement for very many tenant farmers, and that the result in some cases to men who might be induced to purchase would be disastrous. They would find themselves in difficulties in the future, and then this Bill would have to be amended. He appealed to the Chief Secretary to consider this important point seriously, and to see whether a change in the proposal could not be made whereby landlords and tenants would be left perfectly free. He could understand the proposal to fix the limit if this were a compulsory Bill, but under a perfectly voluntary Bill landlords who were willing to give more than 30 per cent. reductions to tenants should be free to make that arrangement.

Motion made, and Question "That the Chairman do report Progress; and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Dillon.*)

Put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

SUPPLY [11TH JUNE].

Resolution reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

CLASS II.

"That a sum, not exceeding £136,907, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and expenses of the Local Government Board."

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [8TH JUNE, EVENING SITTING].

Resolutions reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

1, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,549,430, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and working expenses of the Post Office Telegraph Service."

CLASS IV.

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £88,619, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and other expenses of the British Museum, and of the Natural History Museum, including certain grants in aid."

3. "That a sum, not exceeding £7,027, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and expenses of the National Gallery, and of the National Gallery of British Art, Millbank, including a grant in aid for the purchase of pictures."

4. "That a sum, not exceeding £2,445, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and expenses of the National Portrait Gallery, including a grant in aid for the purchase of portraits."

5. "That a sum, not exceeding £3,281, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the salaries and expenses of the Wallace Collection (Hertford House)."

6. "That a sum, not exceeding £23,780, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for sundry grants in aid of Scientific Investigation, etc., and other grants."

7. "That a sum, not exceeding £77,100, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for grants in aid of the expenses of certain Universities and Colleges in Great Britain, and of the expenses under the Welsh Intermediate Education Act, 1889."

Resolutions agreed to.

Adjourned at two minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 16th June, 1903.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with: Blackheath and Greenwich District Electric Light.

And also the Certificate that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with: Grindleford, Baslow, and Bakewell Railway.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

South-Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway Bill [H.L.]. Petition for additional provision; of the South Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway Company; together with the proposed clause annexed thereto; read, and referred to the Examiners.

Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.], (Ramsbottom Urban District Council Order). A witness ordered to attend the Select Committee.

Grindleford, Baslow, and Bakewell Railway Bill. Examiner's Certificate of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Tuesday next.

Manchester Southern Tramways (Lancashire) Bill [H.L.]; Manchester Southern Tramways (Cheshire) Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Select Committee, that the Committee have consolidated the said Bills, with Amendments, under the title of the Manchester Southern Tramways Bill [H.L.]; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

Manchester Southern Tramways (Lancashire) Bill [H.L.]; and Manchester Southern Tramways (Cheshire) Bill [H.L.], now Manchester Southern Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Bristol Corporation Bill [H.L.]. The King's consent signified; and Bill reported, with Amendments.

Commercial Gas Bill. Reported, with Amendments.

Salford Corporation Bill [H.L.]. The King's consent signified; and Bill reported, with Amendments.

Scottish Central Electric Power Bill [H.L.]. Read 2ª.

Cork Harbour Bill. Read 2ª, and committed.

London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill; East Ham Improvement Bill; Highland and Invergarry and Fort Augustus Railway Companies Bill; Wellingborough and District Tramroads Bill. Read 2ª, and committed. The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Bill; Cheshire Lines Committee Bill; Newcastle-upon-Tyne Electric Supply Bill. Read 2ª, and committed.

Midland and Belfast and Northern Counties Railways Bill; Watford and Edgware Railway Bill. Read 2ª, and committed. The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Wood Green Urban District Council Bill. Read 2ª.

Carmarthenshire Electric Power Bill. [H.L.]. Read 3ª; Amendments made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway Bill. Standing Order No. 93 considered (according to Order), and dispensed with, with respect to a petition of Messrs. Frederick Boyd Brown and Charles Wells. Leave given to present the said Petition.

Knott End Railway (Extension of Time) Bill [H.L.]. Returned from the Commons agreed to.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill. House in Committee (according to Order). Amendments made. Standing Committee negatived. Report of Amendments to be received on Thursday next.

Local Government Provisional Order (Housing of the Working Classes) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill. Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill. Read 2ª (according to Order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]; Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]. House in Committee (according to Order): Bills reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bills to be read 3ª on Thursday next.

Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.]. House in Committee (according to Order); Amendments made; Standing Committee negatived; Report of Amendments to be received on Thursday next.

Polling Districts (County Councils) Bill [H.L.]; Polling Arrangements (Parliamentary Boroughs) Bill [H.L.]. Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 10) Bill (No. 108); Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 12) Bill (No. 109); Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 14) Bill (No. 110); Local Government Provisional Order (No. 16) Bill (No. 111); Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) Bill (No. 112). Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; to be printed; referred to the Examiners, and to be read 2ª on Thursday next.—(*The Lord Kenyon.*)

Caledonian Railway Order Confirmation Bill (No. 113); Edinburgh Corporation (Markets, Slaughter-houses, etc.) Order Confirmation Bill (No. 114); Grangemouth Water Order Confirmation Bill (No. 115); Lanarkshire Electricity and Refuse Destruction Order Confirmation Bill (No. 116). Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; to be printed, and (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899), deemed to have been read 2ª (*The Lord Balfour*), and reported from the Committee.

PETITIONS.

DECLARATION OF THE SOVEREIGN AGAINST TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

Petitions for abrogation of; of Roman Catholics residing in Croxdale; Shanklin and Sandown; and Brixton; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

SOUTH AFRICA.

Minutes of Proceedings of the South African Customs Union Conference, held at Bloemfontein, March, 1903; Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

MUNICIPAL TRADING.

Ordered, That the evidence taken by the Joint Committee on Municipal Trading during the session of 1900, be referred to the Joint Committee on Municipal Trading of the present session.

NEW BILL.

NEWCASTLE CHAPTER (AMENDMENT) BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to make further provision for the foundation of a Dean and Chapter of Newcastle, and for other purposes connected therewith—Was presented by the Lord Bishop of St. Albans; read 1ª, to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Tuesday next. (No. 117.)

MUSICAL COPYRIGHT BILL [H.L.].

Reported from the Standing Committee with Amendments. The Report thereof to be received on Thursday next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 106.)

STATUTE LAW REVISION (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.].

Reported from the Standing Committee without Amendment, and to be read 3^a on Thursday next.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE BILL [H.L.].

Reported from the Standing Committee without further Amendment. The Report of the Amendments made in Committee of the whole House to be received on Thursday next.

COAL MINES (CERTIFICATES) BILL.

Reported from the Standing Committee with an Amendment. The Report thereof to be received on Thursday next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 107.)

RULES OF ORDER.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether there are any precedents for Bills being proceeded with in Parliament on any subject under inquiry and consideration at the time by a Committee or Commission; and, if so, will he state what those precedents are. I am referring, of course, to the action taken by the Government with regard to the County Councils Bill and the Borough Funds Bill; and, even if the noble Lord is able to produce precedents for Bills being proceeded with on a subject under inquiry by a Committee, then I should say, on the principle that many a rule is better in the breach than in the observance, that those precedents should not be followed.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND (Lord BALFOUR of BURLEIGH): The noble Earl is a little difficult to deal with, because if any number of precedents are produced, he will not pay any attention to them. The noble Earl's Question proceeds on the assumption that the Bills to which he has alluded refer to the subject under inquiry by the Joint Committee on Municipal Trading, but that is not so. The reference to the Joint Committee is—

> "To consider and report as to the principles which should govern powers given by Bills and Provisional Orders to municipal and other local authorities for industrial enterprise within or without the area of their jurisdiction."

These Bills in no way determine what those principles shall be. The object in the one case is to enable County Councils, subject to certain restrictions, to defray the cost of promoting Bills, and, in the other case, so far as the promotion of Bills is concerned, to improve the machinery under which the consent of the constituent body is obtained. I would point out that the greater portion of what is described as municipal trading is done under the powers of general Acts, and the way to stop that, if it is thought desirable to stop it after the inquiry, is to limit the powers given by those general Acts to the various bodies.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS rose to reply amid some cries of "Order!" He was contending that these Bills dealt with the subject referred to the Joint Committee when——

EARL SPENCER, interposing, said the noble Earl was not in order in making a speech after a reply had been given to his Question.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (The Earl of HALSBURY): I think the noble Earl is exceeding the licence which we are all delighted to give him; but, as the matter has been called to my attention, I think he is clearly out of order.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: Is it not a fact that the only way to stop a Peer is to move that he be no longer heard?

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: I do not think that is quite accurate. If the noble Earl persisted with his speech despite the cries of "Order," the course suggested might be pursued; but in the circumstances it would be extremely discourteous.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: It would be extremely discourteous, but I do not see how you can stop any Member of this House except by means of a Motion. I have often heard your Lordship say you are only a Member of this House.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: Certainly.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN: You may express an opinion, but if a Member chooses to disregard it, what is to happen then?

The Earl of WEMYSS: May I go on?

The LORD CHANCELLOR: No.

The Earl of WEMYSS: Then I shall reserve what I have to say till a later stage.

BRITISH INTERESTS IN CHINA.

The Earl of MAYO: My Lords, I beg to ask His Majesty's Government (1) whether Russians have obtained a concession for a railway guaranteed by the Chinese Government from Ching-ting-fu, on the main line from Peking to Han-kau to Tai-yuen-fu, the capital of Shan-si; (2) whether Germans have been conceded by the Chinese Government two important extensions of railway, namely, first, from Te-chau on the Grand Canal to Ching-ting-fu, this being a continuation of the main line of railway which is being pushed across Shan-tung from Kiao-chau Bay through Tsi-nanfu, the capital, to the Grand Canal; secondly, from Yen-chau in Shan-tung, on the Tien-tsin-Chin-Kiang main line to Kai-fong-fu, the capital of Honan; (3) whether the concession granted to M. Rouffart, a Belgian, who is now at Peking awaiting the Imperial edict sanctioning that concession, is for a railway from Kai-fong-fu, the capital of Honan, to Honan city, and carries with it a Chinese Government guarantee and an option for the railway's extension to Tung-Kuan, the key of Western China, and Si-ngan-fu, the capital of Shen-si. In putting these Questions I would ask the noble Marquess who surveys the foreign affairs of mankind from China to Peru to accompany me in a trip to the Flowery Land, the land of the Mandarin and the pigtail. My reason for this peregrination is this. There appeared in *The Times* of 10th June last, under the heading "Railway Rivalry," a communication from the able correspondent of that paper at Peking. His statements are always found to be right. When negotiations were being carried on at Peking his statements were not only found to be right, but what he prophesied came true: and, therefore, this is no canard or mare's nest to which I am directing your Lordships' attention, but a subject well worthy of the attention of the House. If you wonder what I have to do with China I will say at once that three Englishmen, with myself, were the original directors of the Pekin Syndicate, which obtained, in May, 1898, the Shan-si and Honan concessions—

> "For mining purposes, iron works, the transport of all minerals, and also the power to construct branch railways to connect with main lines or with water navigation,"

which is the old and most important means of carriage and communication in the Chinese Empire. Since that day much water has flowed down the Yang-tsze. The Pekin Syndicate and the British and Chinese Corporation have joined in regard to railway construction, and have thus been strengthened in their common object. The Pekin Syndicate, since obtaining their concession, have carried from England to China some 19,000 tons of railway material, transported it some 500 miles by land and river, and have constructed 75 miles of railway, of which 54 miles are now being run over by locomotives. So that this concession has not been allowed to remain idle, as I am sorry to say others have.

Coming to my questions, I would explain in regard to the first that the line from Ching-Ting-fu to Tai-yuen-fu, originally conceded to the Russo-Chinese Bank in May, 1898, was without a Chinese Imperial Government guarantee, but early in this year the bank obtained a guarantee on all fours with the trunk Peking-Han-kau Railway. This Ching-Ting-fu Tai-yuen-fu line touches some of the coalfields originally conceded to the Pekin Syndicate, and I have reason to believe that it will be capitalised in France. I do not take exception to this move, but I would call attention to its political importance. The railway will undoubtedly strike south-west from Tai-yuen-fu into the centre of China, on to the province of Szu-chuan, the richest and most populous province in the Chinese Empire, and no doubt it will eventually join with the French advancing northwards through Yunnan. We might look with equanimity on this as a development of China by means of railways but for the fact that this province of Szu-chuan is in the upper waters of the river Yang-tsze, which is most distinctly the British sphere of influence; and the British sphere of influence in the Yang-tsze Valley is another name for the open door in China.

As to the second Question, the fact that the Germans have obtained concessions to extend their railways from Shantung, which will tap the coalfields in Shan-si and Honan, is not disadvantageous to the Pekin Syndicate, which holds these concessions; but it must be remembered that the object is to develop the German port of Kiao-chau to the detriment of Nanking and Shanghai, where British interests predominate, the river Yang-tsze debouching at the former place. All interested in British trade in China must see from what I have stated that foreign Governments are backing up their subjects who are seeking and working for railway concessions. All that is asked of our Government is that they shall afford the same backing to British subjects who are engaged in pushing the interests of British trade in China.

My third Question deals with another line, non-British, ostensibly from Kai-fong-fu to Honan city, and on to Tung-Kuan, the key of Western China. This will, no doubt, form part of the Russo-Chinese Bank extension into Western China mentioned in my first Question. For unless the application which I understand has been made by the Pekin Syndicate and the British and Chinese Corporation, now one, and representing strong British interests, is granted for the railway line from Nanking through Si-ngan-fu into the province of Szu-chuan and strongly supported by His Majesty's Government, this line will in all probability be granted to other than British interests. British railway prospects, even in the Yang-tsze, are no better than they were before; and bearing in mind the telegram from Sir C. MacDonald to Lord Salisbury, dated September 4th, 1898, which stated that the Pekin Syndicate were entitled to construct railways from their mines to the Yang-tsze, and also bearing in mind the valuable Shan-si and Honan mineral concessions obtained bv the Pekin Syndicate, it appears that they are denied their natural outlet to the Yang-tsze. I do not put aside the political question to urge the claims of this purely British syndicate, but I must point out that the political question is wrapped up in the question of the construction of railways by foreigners and therefore affects the economic question of trade and development by British enterprise and British capital. I therefore hope the noble Marquess in his answer will set at rest any misgivings and doubts as to His Majesty's Government giving their strongest support to those interested in, and to those who have put their money into railway enterprise in, and developed the mineral resources of China, and who have shown their earnestness in carrying out the obligations I have set forth. I do not speak in any alarmist sense, being hopeful that the noble Marquess will continue to carry on the work of his predecessor, who was always most anxious to help forward this development policy in any way. But since then foreign Governments have been much more active and China has become more easy of access. For these reasons I have brought the subject before your Lordships' House.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of LANSDOWNE): My Lords, I am afraid that if I were to follow the noble Earl minutely into the details of the subjects covered by his Questions I should be compelled to make a somewhat lengthy excursion into the regions of Chinese geography—an excursion which, I fear, would be somewhat puzzling to your Lordships. But I think I can give him a comparatively simple answer to the three Questions on the Paper. I will only preface what I have to say by observing that it would perhaps have been well if the noble Earl had drafted his Questions in such a way as to make it evident that he desired to call attention, not only to questions of fact, but to those questions of railway policy upon which he touched during the course of his speech. As to my noble friend's Questions, I have to say that the answer to the first Question is in the affirmative. His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Peking reported to us last December that an agreement between the Director-General of Southern Railways and the Russo-Chinese Bank for the financing of a railway from Cheng-Ting-fu, on the Peking-Hankau Railway, to Tai-yuen-fu had received the Imperial sanction. That is the answer to the first Question. The second Question raises rather more intricate points. The British and Chinese Corporation and the German syndicate are at this moment jointly negotiating with the Chinese Government for a final agreement for a line from Tien-tsin to the Yang-tsze. We are given to understand that the part in which the German syndicate is interested includes the construction of the two branch lines referred to in the noble Earl's question—I mean the line from Techou on the Grand Canal to Chang-ting fu, and the other line from Yen-chau, in Shan-tung, to Kai-fong-fu, and this action on the part of the German syndicate has been taken without any objection on the part of the British and Chinese Corporation. On the other hand, the latter corporation—the British and Chinese Corporation—acting with the Peking syndicate, with which the noble Earl, as I understand, is to some extent connected, are applying for other lines running westwards from the British portion of the Tientsin-Yang-tsze line. I gather that one of these lines will be a line towards Szu-chuan, the importance of which the noble Earl has so correctly pointed out; and I am able to say that those two British associations are applying for those concessions with the fullest and complete support of his Majesty's Government. I now come to the third railway mentioned by the noble Earl. The matter stands as follows—The Peking-Hankau Railway Syndicate, which, I think, is under Franco-Belgian control, are understood to have obtained the Kai-fong-fu-Honan railway concession, but His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires has told us in a recent telegram that the Chinese Government altogether deny having given concessions for the extension of the line to Si-ngan-fu. That, I gather, is a point to which the noble Lord attaches importance. I do not think it would be convenient that I should, on this occasion, enter into the general question of the position of British railway interests in China; but I shall certainly be prepared to show, if necessary, that the representatives of British enterprise in that country have not come away by any means empty-handed. They have secured some extremely important concessions; and I am constrained to confirm an observation made by the noble Earl—namely, that it does not always follow that because a valuable concession is obtained it is turned to account with as much promptitude and expedition as everyone would desire. But, on the other hand, I freely admit that we have had serious cause for complaint of the manner in which the Chinese Government has dealt with the applications of some of these *concessionnaires*, and we have found it necessary recently to make a strong remonstrance to the Chinese Government upon the subject. Our Ambassador, Sir Ernest Satow, is about to return, after a well-earned holiday, to Peking. And he will go back fully aware of the views of His Majesty's Government and with instructions to support them energetically. In conclusion, I may say that the noble Earl may depend upon it that the associations which represent British interests in the matter of railway construction in China will certainly receive from His Majesty's Government a backing which I hope will bear comparison with the backing received by the representatives of other countries.

House adjourned at five minutes past Five o'clock to Thursday next, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 16*th June*, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz., Exeter Corporation Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

London and North-Western Railway Bill [Lords]. Read a second time, and committed.

St. Luke's Church and Parish Quoad Sacra, Edinburgh, Order Confirmation Bill [Lords]. Considered; to be read the third time upon Friday.

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (East Ham, etc.) Bill [Lords]; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill. Read a second time, and committed.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP F).

Mr. **GEORGE WHITELEY** reported from the Committee on Group F of Private Bills, That the parties petitioning against the Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) [Dublin Order] Bill had stated that the evidence of Robert Thomas Blackburn, Secretary of the County Dublin County Council, of No. 11, Rutland Square, Dublin, and James W. Drury, Local Government Board Inspector, was essential to their case; and, it having been proved that their attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said Robert Thomas Blackburn and James W. Drury do attend the said Committee To-morrow, at Eleven of the Clock.

Ordered, That Robert Thomas Blackburn and James W. Drury do attend the Committee on Group F of Private Bills To-morrow. at Eleven of the Clock.

STANDING ORDERS.

Resolutions reported from the Select Committee:—

1. "That in the case of the Kip's Patents Bill [Lords], the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

2. "That, in the case of the Alexandra Park and Palace, Petition for leave to deposit a Petition for a Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:—That the parties be permitted to deposit their Petition for a Bill."

3. "That, in the case of the Hove, Worthing, and District Tramways Bill [Lords], the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:—"That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

Resolution agreed to.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to, Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1.) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 2) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill; Market Drayton Gas Bill, without Amendment.

Amendments to, Wellington (Salop) Gas Bill [Lords] without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act for extending the operation of and amending the Union of Benefices Act, 1860, and for the disposal of unnecessary chapels of ease." [Union of Benefices Act (1860) Amendment Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Chatham and District Light Railways Company to construct tramways and tramroads and other works; and for other purposes." [Chatham and District Light Railways Bill [Lords.]

Chatham and District Light Railways Bill [Lords], read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.

Petitions against: from Brighton; and Wallasey; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

Petition from York, for alteration of law; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HOUSES (HOURS OF CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Paisley, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petition from Bradford, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.

Petitions against: from Teddington; Wallasey; Brighton; Lewisham; Croydon; and Wolverhampton; to lie upon the Table.

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Perth; and Auchterarder; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.

Petition from Perth, against; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Newmilnes, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

SOUTH AFRICA.

Copy presented, of Minutes of Proceedings of the South African Customs Union Conference held at Bloemfontein, March, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PROSECUTION OF OFFENCES ACTS, 1879 AND 1884.

Address for "Return showing the working of the Regulations made in 1886 for carrying out the Prosecution of Offences Acts, 1879 and 1884, with Statistics setting forth the number, cost, and results of the Proceedings instituted by the Director in accordance with those Regulations from the 1st day of January, 1902, to the 31st day of December, 1902 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 154, of Session 1902)."—(*Mr. Cochrane.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Employment of Young Children on Tea Estates in Ceylon.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has yet received a Report from the Governor of Ceylon with reference to the employment of children of six years old and upwards on tea estates.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) I have not yet received the Report on this subject which I asked for on 7th May. The Governor has not yet had sufficient time to prepare it, as the despatch could not have reached the Colony before the 24th May.

Ceylon Taxation Committee Report.

MR. SCHWANN: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Educational Cess Committee has finished its sittings in Ceylon; and, if so, whether he will state what are the recommendations embodied in the final Report of the Committee, and say whether it deals with the education of the children of Tamil labourers on tea estates and elsewhere.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) I have not yet received the Report of the Commission on the Incidence of Taxation in Ceylon to which the hon. Member doubtless refers, and am not aware whether it has yet finished its sittings.

Septic Tanks—Danger of Explosions.

SIR JOHN ROLLESTON (Leicester): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to explosions of septic tanks at Exeter during the experimental stages, at Walton-on-Naze in December last, and at Sheringham in Norfolk on the 1st May last, the last of which caused the death of three people and injuries to several others; and, if so, whether in view of the number of septic tanks which have lately been erected throughout the country, he will consider the advisability of making these tanks subject to a special licence.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) My right hon. friend has asked me to answer this Question. I am aware of the unfortunate explosion at Sheringham, and I have received some information as to the other two cases referred to. The Royal Commission on Sewage Disposal are at present investigating the various methods and appliances for the disposal of sewage, including septic tanks; and I understand they have caused special inquiry to be made into the circumstances of the accident at Sheringham. Legislation would be necessary to give effect to the suggestion contained in the Question, but it would seem to be desirable to await the Report of the Commission before determining whether any legislation should be undertaken on the subject.

Vivisection Return—Date of Publication.

Dr. SHIPMAN (Northampton): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can now give the date when the Returns of Experiments on Living Animals for the year 1902 will be published.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas.*) The Return in question has now been issued.

Naval Construction Programme.

Mr. JAMES HOPE (Fife, W.): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can state what has been done up to the present to carry out the naval construction programme for the current financial year.

(*Answered by Mr. Arnold-Forster.*) All the necessary steps are being taken with a view to placing the orders as nearly as possible at the times arranged for in the programme, in order to earn the money voted, before the end of the financial year.

Sale of Irish Land—Bonuses.

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): To ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland if landlords who agree with their tenants for the sale of their estates to them within the limits sanctioned by the Land Bill will receive any part of the bonus; and, if so, how will this be calculated where the landlord cannot sell the whole of such estate.

(*Answered by Mr. Atkinson.*) As the Bill is framed, the vendor of any lands which the Commissioners deem fit to be dealt with as an estate, will be entitled to a bonus calculated on the amount of the purchase money of the estate sold, less the price of any portion thereof resold to him.

Governorships of Irish Prisons.

Mr. CHARLES DEVLIN (Galway): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state why Mr. Munroe was promoted from the Burmah Police Force to the governorship of Castlebar Prison, which is a third class prison; and, after six months of this duty, was promoted over the heads of Irish officials to the governorship of Galway Prison, which is in the category of a second class prison.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) Mr. Munroe was selected for appointment as governor in the service of the Irish Prisons' Board on the ground that he was the best qualified candidate for the position. The same principle regulated his subsequent promotion from Castlebar to Londonderry (not Galway) Prison.

Inquiry into Increase of Lunacy in Ireland.

Mr. SAMUEL YOUNG (Cavan, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Workhouse Commission, when going into the question of utilising some of the workhouses as auxiliary asylums, will inquire into the apparent increase in lunacy and the accommodation and management of lunatic asylums; whether, if an inquiry into the increase of lunacy is not within the scope of the Workhouse Commission, he will extend the scope to supply the desired accurate information on the subject; and will he say whether the Inspectors of Lunacy have recommended that such an inquiry should not be held.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The Commission will inquire into the classification and treatment of the insane who are relieved from the poor rates in workhouses, but will not investigate the question of the accommodation and management of district lunatic asylums; nor will it inquire into the general question of the increase in lunacy. In reply to the concluding inquiry, any communications that may have passed between the Government and the inspectors of lunatics on the subject of the Commission are confidential.

Irish Poor Law Medical Officers.

DR. THOMPSON (Monaghan, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if, in view of the dissatisfaction existing in the ranks of the Irish Poor Law medical officers, he will consent to appoint in the near future a Royal Commission to inquire into the working of the Irish Poor Law system in all its branches.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The Commission recently appointed will consider the general question of the amalgamation of unions and certain other reforms in Irish Poor Law administration which have been indicated in the published warrant constituting the Commission. The deliberations of the Commission have been limited in their scope with a view to the completion of the necessary inquiries in the shortest possible time, and to the avoidance of matters which are regarded as contentious. As at present advised I am not prepared to recommend the appointment of a Commission to investigate the larger question of the working of the Poor Law system in all its branches.

Preservation of Big Game in Africa.

SIR HARRY SETON-KARR (St. Helens): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the provisions of the International Conference held in London in May 1899, for the preservation of big game in Africa, are now being carried out in all parts of Africa under the control of the Colonial Office, and particularly if the prohibition of the export of elephant tusks under 11 lbs. in weight is being strictly enforced, and by what means; also whether, having regard to the regulation that licencees must make a Return of game killed, these Returns from the date the regulation came into force can be collected from all territories in Africa under the control of the Colonial Office and presented to Parliament; and whether he can state in what game reserves in Africa officials and natives are allowed to kill game, and to what extent and under what conditions; also to what extent and at what cost the sanctity of the game reserves in Africa is enforced by game wardens, police or otherwise.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) The parts of Africa under the control of the Colonial Office which come within the zone defined by Article 1 of the Convention for the Preservation of Wild Animals, Birds, and Fish in Africa, of the 19th May 1900, are the British Colonies and Protectorates in West Africa and North Western Rhodesia. Regulations for the preservation of wild animals have been brought into force in the colony and protectorate of Sierra Leone, in the colonies of the Gold Coast and Ashanti, in the northern territories of the Gold Coast, and in the protectorates of Southern and Northern Nigeria. In the other West African colonies or protectorates regulations are in preparation, and will be brought into force very shortly. In Southern Nigeria, by Order 8 of 1901, made under Proclamation No. 8 of 1901, the killing of young elephants, and the possession and sale of any tusk weighing less than 10 lbs. is prohibited under a penalty not exceeding £50 fine or a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months with or without hard labour; and in Northern Nigeria the Proclamation No. 15 of 1901 contains a provision to the same effect. The regulations which are in force at the present time in the other colonies and protectorates mentioned above contain no provisions for the prohibition or regulation of the export of elephant tusks under 10 lbs. (the weight specified by the Convention) in weight. No game reserves have been formed in any part of British West Africa; and Northern Nigeria, Ashanti, and the northern territories of the Gold Coast are at present the only places where any regulations exist with reference to licencees making a Return of the game killed by them. No Returns have yet been received in the Colonial Office, but the Governor of the Gold Coast and the High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria will be asked to furnish them. With regard to North Western Rhodesia no proclamation appears as yet to have been issued, but I am communicating with Lord Milner on the subject.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

British Investments Abroad.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the rate of increase between 1881–82, and 1891 – 92, and 1901 – 02, in that proportion of the income derived by inhabitants of the United Kingdom from investments abroad, which can be identified in the statistics of the Income Tax, may be taken to represent with approximate accuracy the rate of increase in the total of such income, or whether improved methods of assessment to the tax would vitiate such an inference; and, if so, to what extent.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): I cannot offer an opinion on the general question raised by the hon. Member; but I may say that a material improvement in the method of assessment and collection was made by Section 26 of the Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1885, whereby bankers and dealers in coupons were made responsible for the deduction of tax from the proceeds of coupons collected by them from abroad, and much of the improved collection in years subsequent to 1885 may be attributed to that cause. It would, however, be impossible to name any definite figure as an estimate of the effect of that Act. As between 1891–92 and 1901–02, the collection has not been affected by any administrative changes other than those due to the changes of 1894 and 1898 as regards exemptions and abatements. These would tend to make the apparent increase slightly less than the real increase of income on investments abroad.

Irish Poor Law Administration Inquiry.

MR. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the percentage of female and children inmates in Irish workhouses, and also in view of the number of lady members of Poor Law Boards, and the interest taken by women generally in the Poor Law administration of Ireland, he will consider the advisability of adding a lady member to the recently appointed Commission of Inquiry into the working of the Irish Poor Law system.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.): At my right hon. friend's request I will reply to this Question. The constitution of the Commission was very carefully considered, and it is not proposed to make any addition to the number of Commissioners. It will, of course, be open to them to take the evidence of ladies interested in the matters under inquiry.

The Fiscal Policy of the Empire.

MR. MANSFIELD (Lincolnshire, Spalding): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been drawn to a cablegram from the Governor of New South Wales to the effect that the colony expresses great satisfaction at the declaration by the British Government that every self-governing colony shall be secured in the free exercise of its right to enter into close trade relations with the mother country; and, if so, will he state whether a similar declaration has been communicated to the other Colonial Governments; and will he undertake to lay upon the Table the text of all the communications which have passed between Colonial Governments and the Colonial Office in relation thereto.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I am not sure, but I rather expect that the hon. Gentleman did not hear the answer which I gave to the Leader of the Opposition on this subject last Monday.† I then stated that I was not aware to what declarations the telegram mentioned in the Question referred. I also stated that perhaps those responsible for the telegram or message contained in the telegram, had in view the declared policy of His Majesty's Government. No telegrams, I have ascertained since, have been sent by the Colonial Office; but I would read this extract from a despatch of Lord Salisbury in 1897 when he denounced the Belgian and German treaties. He instructed our Ambassadors to say to the Governments concerned—

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† See page 955.

> "That the object was to remove a barrier against the internal fiscal arrangements of the British Empire which is inconsistent with the close ties of commercial intercourse which subsist, and which should be consolidated between the mother country and the colonies."

I do not know if it be so, but I think it is quite possible that was the statement which the Colonial Governor had in view.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): Have any steps been taken to ascertain what declaration the Governor of New South Wales referred to.

Mr. A. J BALFOUR: I have certainly taken no steps, and I see no reason why steps should be taken.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee): Will Papers relating to the denunciation of the treaty be presented?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: That is a question which should be addressed to the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. I have not the date in my mind.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I ought to inform the House of a fact which was not present to my mind when I made certain statements about business a short time ago. I then stated that I hope to be able to take the Irish Land Bill without interruption for a considerable period. It now appears that it is absolutely necessary that the Finance Bill should become law on June 30th owing to certain drawbacks which have to be paid on that date. This subject will be better explained by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but it is a necessity, and in these circumstances I have no choice but to ask the House to resume the consideration of the Committee stage of the Finance Bill next Monday.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Is the right hon. Gentleman in a position to make any statement as to when the Sugar Convention Bill and the agreement with the Cunard Company will be taken?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have no objection to the hon. Member putting that Question on the Paper, but I may say at once that there is no chance of these subjects being taken within the next two or three weeks.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: I understand we shall have notice?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes.

SELECTION.

Mr. Wodehouse reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had nominated the following five Members to serve on the Joint Committee of Lords and Commons on the Port of London Bill: Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Laurence Hardy, Sir Alexander Henderson, Mr. Mellor, and Mr. Russell Rea.

Report to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILL.

SHOPS (No. 2) BILL.

"To amend the law relating to shops," presented by Sir Charles Dilke; supported by Mr. John Burns, Mr. Flower, Mr. Lloyd-George. Mr. Kemp, Mr. M'Crae, Mr. Melville, Mr. Nannetti, Sir Barrington Simeon, and Mr. Tennant; to be read a second time upon Friday, and to be printed. [Bill 244.]

IRISH LAND BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. Lowther (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:—

Amendment proposed—

> "In page 1, line 15, to leave out from the word 'advance,' to the end of Sub-section (2), and insert the words 'provided that the purchase annuity payable under this Act will be, to the case of the purchase of a holding, subject in a judicial rent fixed or agreed to since the passing of the Act of 1896, not less than 15 per cent. below the existing rent, and in the case of the purchase of a holding subject to a judicial rent fixed before that date, or of a holding which is not subject to a judicial rent, but the tenancy in which is one to which, in the opinion of the Land Commission, the Land

Purchase Acts apply, not less than 25 per cent. below the existing rent.'"—(*Mr. John Redmond.*)

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'or' in line 18, stand part of the clause."

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said two remarkable features in this debate must have impressed themselves upon the mind of everyone who followed the course of the discussion on the previous day. They were, firstly, that up to the present moment, after a debate on what I might describe as the most important single Amendment on the Paper to this Bill; not one Member representing an Irish constituency had risen to oppose it. The second remarkable feature to which he alluded was the speech delivered by the hon. Member for York, who had in the course of that debate put himself forward as the chief spokesman of the irreconcilable section of the Irish landlords. At that stage they were entitled to put to themselves the question, if the Government should be so badly advised as to resist this Amendment and they were forced to go to a division "How will the Irish vote go." He said without the slightest doubt, that if they were forced to decide on that question in the Division Lobby—and he trusted they would not be—they would have, in favour of the Amendment, at least ten to one of the Irish representatives. The Government, if they opposed this Amendment, would not have in their Division Lobby, outside the two Irish law officers, four Irish Members. On what ground was this Bill being recommended to the people of Great Britain; on what ground had it received an almost unparalleled endorsement from the House of Commons? It was on the ground that it was a great measure, drafted not at the bidding, or at the demand, of one or other party in Ireland, but for the purpose of promoting a great and peaceful settlement of this war which had desolated Ireland for generations, and that it would be made, if it was not already, a measure acceptable to and approved of, practically speaking, by all sections of the Irish population. With what face would the Government continue to recommend their Bill to the people of this country if upon this vital Amendment—the most important that now stood upon the Paper—if at the very outset of the discussion they forced a conclusion upon the House against ten to one of the Irish Members. The position was an impossible one, and he refused to believe that any Irish Minister who wished, as he admitted the Chief Secretary did, to signalise his administration by a real attempt to settle this great question upon lines acceptable to all sections in Ireland, would inaugurate the discussion upon the Bill by such an extraordinary position as that. If this most important Amendment from the Irish benches was defeated in the lobby by English votes with the overwhelming preponderance of the Irish representatives in favour of it —if this Amendment, proposed by the Leader of the Irish Nationalist Party and supported by a majority of the Irish Unionists in this House, were to be defeated by an English vote, he asked the Chief Secretary to consider what would be the effect of such a proceeding upon the tone and the temper in which the further consideration of this Bill would be carried on. He considered that a matter of vital importance. If this Bill was to be made a great measure of appeasement and peace in Ireland, as he hoped it would, it was essential that the discussion should be on lines of conciliation and goodwill in all parts of the House, and it would be a most deplorable thing that the opening days of the debate on the Bill should be marked by a clash of feeling in which the almost unanimous will of Ireland on a vital point was set aside and overcome by uninformed English opinion. Could anything be more calculated to spoil the hope of the Bill being received in Ireland in that spirit which was essential to its success if it was to be a measure of peace and appeasement? Let them remember that it was not only necessary that this Bill should be framed in this House in accordance with the views of Irishmen who understood the question, but it was also necessary that it should be received in Ireland with goodwill on both sides, and worked not in a spirit of partisanship or bitterness, but as a measure of appeasement.

He did not go quite so far as some hon. Members in saying that if this Amendment were carried practically all differences of opinion would be settled. Nor did he go so far as the hon. Member for South Tyrone in saying that the first clause was practically the whole Bill. In his opinion there were other questions of vital importance to be considered—such questions, for instance, as the reinstatement of evicted tenants and the resettlement of the West, without which no Land Bill could be accepted in Ireland as really satisfactory, and also the omission of Clause 17 and Part 3 of the Bill, all these, he thought, were matters of vital importance. But he admitted that this was undoubtedly a most vital and essential Amendment, and it had this peculiarity about it—it was the only Amendment on which a certain small irreconcilable section of the Irish landlords had chosen to take up a position in connection with which they said their interests were vitally affected. He felt bound in justice to himself to say that so far as he was concerned he favoured the old procedure of land purchase in Ireland. He believed—and he had not been converted from his opinion by any of the arguments he had heard in this debate—he believed that the Ashbourne Act was the best Act ever passed by this House for the settlement of the Irish land question by the purchase system. He still believed in the old system of the inspection of holdings as the only effective protection for the taxpayer in England. He denied that this old system of the inspection of holdings had been or need be the main source of any serious delay in the process of carrying out land purchase. It was merely a question of appointing a sufficient staff. The delays which occurred in the past under this system, were really due, not to the ne essity of inspecting the holdings but to legal questions which arose. Whenever they touched the law they were immediately plunged in delays, the end of which no man could see. It was the questions of title and legal questions affecting various interests that really caused the delay and not the inspection of holdings. Even where the necessity of determining whether the holdings were full security for the advance was done away with, they could not do away with the necessity of inspection for other purposes, for they had got to map the holding, to determine the boundaries, and in many cases to correct the boundaries. They had to go on the holding to determine another vital question, and that was the question whether the tenant was really in possession. Otherwise the advance could not legally be made. He knew of a case where, owing to the neglect of that important investigation, the advance was made and the holding sold to a man who was only a middleman and had sub-let the holding, and was not really in possession at all. That man was now grinding the real tenant, having purchased an estate of which he was not really in possession at all. There were also questions of turbary rights and other easements of that kind to be considered. All these questions must be properly determined, and they could be determined only by the system of inspection. He held, therefore, that no matter what they did by abolishing inspection they could not get rid of the necessity of ascertaining and fully determining all the rights to which he had referred. No delay need arise from such a procedure, for it was all a question of appointing an adequate staff, and that by no means an expensive staff. He passed, however, from that subject, for he recognised the decision of the National Convention in Dublin on it, a Convention which was amply representative of the tenants of Ireland, and at which they were represented as they never were before, on a great question like that. That Convention decided in favour of this Amendment, and he with all his heart accepted the position. He rose to support the Amendment. Had he been able to be present at the Convention he would have pleaded his own view, but now he heartily accepted the decision that was arrived at there.

But important and vital as this Amendment was, he held that its importance had been increased enormously by the almost brutal frankness with which the hon. and learned Member for York gave expression to the ideas and plans of those for whom he spoke in that House. The hon. and learned Member said yesterday, and he said it with scorn and contempt, that eighteen years purchase was absurd, and that twenty-five years purchase was the only reasonable figure that could be considered by the Irish landlords. That statement, coming from the hon. and learned Member for York, speaking for the irreconcilable section of Irish landlords, was rendered the more remarkable by certain words which occurred in a letter published in the Dublin newspapers of the 23rd April last, from a certain Mr. Lindsay Talbot Crosbie, who sometimes appeared to be a moderate landlord. Mr. Crosbie, said—

> "Somewhere about twenty-eight years purchase is what the landlord requires and it is quite immaterial to him how that is made up."

That was very characteristic of an Irish landlord. Mr. Crosbie went on—

> "If the tenant can give twenty-five years purchase and the State three, which is about what the twelve millions will do, the transaction will go forward."

No doubt it would go forward, and at a very rapid pace. But he did not know what the subsequent results would be, for the tenant on the one hand and the State on the other. He entirely agreed with what was said the preceding day by the hon. Member for Cork City that they might entirely dismiss from their minds all idea of repudiation. He believed that repudiation was entirely out of the question in Ireland. But what was not out of the question was this—that if they embarked upon any system of purchase which might reduce a considerable section of the tenants to genuine poverty, they might be face to face with the alternative of either carrying out wholesale clearances and evictions when they knew the people could not pay, or they might be called on to make reductions in the annuities at the cost of the taxpayers. They knew what the result in that case would be. Public opinion in this country would not support them in making clearances of that kind, and they would then be compelled to make reductions in the annuities, and would begin to find out when too late what the meaning was of the significant language of Mr. Talbot Crosbie when he said he did not care how the money was made up. If there was any idea in the minds of any considerable section of the Irish landlords of using this Bill as a starting point for a great rise in the price of land in Ireland, he said deliberately that this Bill, in that event, would bring not peace to Ireland but the sword. There would be no settlement of the question, and the general condition of the country would be worse than before.

Turning again to the speech of the hon. and learned Member for York, his view was that the general average ought to be twenty-five years purchase in addition to the bonus. He thought the hon. Member for Cork made the bonus out to be equal to five years purchase. He calculated it at four years purchase, and he asked the Committee to note the extraordinary position taken up by the hon. and learned Member for York, who had spoken, with brutal frankness, the views of his friends. The hon. and learned Member's idea of this Bill was that the landlords were to get a bonus of four years purchase, and because they were getting that, they were therefore to raise the average price of the medium holdings in Ireland to twenty-five years purchase. Could such an idea suggest itself to the mind of any man outside the landlord class in Ireland? For twenty years they had been accepting gladly, cheerfully, and voluntarily an average of eighteen years purchase, and now, when the Government came forward, and in order to promote peace and expedite the process of sale, offered a bonus of four years purchase, the landlords turned round and said that the tenants must plank it up by seven years more, merely because the Government were giving the bonus of four years purchase. He had sought with alarm and amazement for some explanation of the extraordinary idea, that there existed the necessity of an enormous increase in the price of Irish estates in order to induce the landlords to sell. The hon. and learned Member for York said also that the number of years purchase had nothing to do with the matter. He was amazed at that statement, because the hon. and learned Member also said that the only thing which concerned the tenant was the amount of the immediate reduction he would obtain, no matter how long he might have to pay. The hon. and learned Member also said that, in his opinion, it did not matter if there was any squeezing up in the number of years purchase, because the finances of the Bill had been so manipulated as to render the system of decadal reductions impossible. That was a matter of vital importance both for the tenant and the State, because, in his opinion, no system could ever be devised more calculated to give security to the State than the system of decadal reductions. That system guarded both the tenant and the State against future fluctuations in the price of produce, and it gave the tenant a substitute for the chances he would otherwise have in the Land Courts.

He turned again to the other question which the Committee ought to ask itself, and insist on being satisfied upon, before proceeding to decide on this momentous Amendment; and that was, what was the ground upon which this claim was built up that an increase in the price of Irish land was necessary to carry on the work of sale? He enthusiastically agreed with the policy of bonus. That was the essence—that was what was at the root and foundation of this whole concordat. They were not getting a shilling of it. It meant that the landlords and tenants of Ireland, after desolating the country for generations, and after, as the Chief Secretary himself said, an army costing £1,400,000 a year had been perpetually employed in protecting the landlords' interests, they had come together and said, in effect, "Would it not be better to spend some of that money in easing the situation," and the representatives of the Nationalist Party had agreed to that. Surely their anxiety for peace—it had been charged that their anxiety had been to prolong this war—was produced by that. Not one penny of bonus would the landlords have got without the co-operation of the tenants' representatives. He thought they were entitled to claim that they had been magnanimous. He thought that the people were entitled to claim something. There was a sum of £10,000,000, or as they would have liked to have made it, £20,000,000, for it is money that must be spent in Ireland, and he said they were entitled to lay claim to some magnanimity in connection with it. They made no claim that any part of it should be applied to reducing the price of land in Ireland as they might have done. He accepted the principle laid down by the hon. Member for Cork that they were willing to close this trouble on the basis of the Ashbourne Acts, to give to the landlords the entire benefit of the bonus, paying them the same price which they had accepted in the open and free market for the last twenty years. Was not that a great concession on the part of the Nationalist Party? After all, £12,000,000 divided amongst a small class was no trifle. He made a calculation the other day, from which it appeared that in the case of Lord De Freyne, who had been in conflict with his tenants, if he sold under this Act for the same price would get a bonus of £40,000 over and above the price that the tenants would have given him at the same number of years purchase under the law as it stood. He asked any English landlord, supposing these terms were offered to him, would he not be content? Would he turn round and say that the Government were going to give him four years purchase, and that therefore they must give him seven more than they otherwise would, or he would not be content? What was the argument upon which this extravagant demand had been founded?

He turned to the speech the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary delivered when he was introducing the Bill of last year. In it he made some statements which he proposed now to traverse. He would base his argument upon his own Returns. Speaking of land purchase he said—

> "If you look into these figures more closely you will see that they are not so satisfactory. You will see that there has been a diminution, I regret to say, during recent years in the amount which has been advanced for land purchase. In 1899 advances were made of £1,900,000, in 1900 £1,800,000, and last year £1,280,000. But those figures do not tell the whole tale."

And he went on—

> "Taking the last four years. The numbers of tenants who applied were 8,000, 6,000, 5,000, and last year only 3,000."

That, he presumed, alluded to the year ending 31st March, 1901. That was last year—

> "I call that an alarming decrease. What are the reasons for that?"

And he went on to give several reasons, but he never alluded to the cost of the tenant having to go to law. He gave reasons which were sound and he gave several which were unsound, and not based upon facts. One was the fall in the price of land stock, and another was that the land sold belonged to landowners who had other sources of income, and, in the third place to landlords who had been forced to sell because they were embarrassed and their creditors urged them to that course. He would show that it was an entirely unsound argument. The landlords who sold represented in the fullest degree the whole body of landlords. They were told that the bankrupt stock was sold out and that they had now to deal with solvent landlords, who could sell or not as they thought fit. He wished he could read out to the Committee (but it would take too long to do so) the figures dealing with this subject. He would take some of them, however. The first name in the list of owners of bankrupt stock was the Duke of Abercorn. Was he of the class of "scallywags" who had been referred to by the hon. Member opposite. Then there was the Marquess of Londonderry, Lord Bath, The O'Connor Don (a pretty shrewd landlord, who knew his own interest well), and Lord Dillon. What class did the latter belong to? Was he a man of such superabundant wealth that he was not in this class. He certainly was not as indifferent to the possession of property as some of them were said to be.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): The hon. Member is impeaching the accuracy of what I said. I said the landlords must be divided into certain classes, Lord Bath, Lord Londonderry, and Lord Dillon all had other interests and other resources.

MR. DILLON said he was speaking about the fact that the Chief Secretary had improved upon his own argument as to the bankrupt stock. He had now stated the case in much more moderate terms. But he referred to the right hon. Gentleman who endeavoured to induce the House of Commons to believe that the landlords who sold were exceptional men in some respects. He denied that. He said that if he went through the list the hon. Gentleman would find that they were a very fair sample of the Irish landlords, and that they sold because they thought that the terms they were getting were a fair and full price, and that for one reason or the other they would rather have the money than the land. Therefore he maintained that that argument was an absolutely absurd argument, and had no foundation whatever in fact. Now he came to the statement that he based a good deal of his case upon—the figures as to the applications. Let him direct attention to what he considered to be the extremely remarkable figures in this respect. He said that the number of applications for loans were 8,000, 6,000, 5,000, and only 3,000 in the year ending the 31st March, 1901. He did not know how the right hon. Gentleman made out those figures, because on examining the last Return, he came to a totally different conclusion. According to that Return the number of applications for loans in the year ending 31st March, 1901, was 4,946, not 3,000 as the Chief Secretary said. But that did not cover the question, because the right hon. Gentleman forgot apparently that since the Act of 1896 applications for loans had been divided into three heads. They had now in this table applications for loans in the ordinary course, applications under Section 40, and applications for loans in the case of estates purchased by the Congested Districts Board and resold to the tenants. When he turned to the second, those under Section 40, he found 1,210, and he found that the total, according to his calculation, was not 3,000 as the Chief Secretary said, but 6,157. The amount in that year applied for (ending 31st March, 1901) was £1,646,000 odd. Now he came to the next year, 1902. In the Return recently issued the number of applications for loans was given at 3,430, but in the Report of the Land Commission, from which presumably these Returns were compiled, under No. 1 they were 4,051, not 3,430. That was to say, under Section 40 there were 1,100 applications, and in the case of the Congested Districts Board, 620—in all, 5,520 applications for loans instead of the 3,000 which the Chief Secretary mentioned; and the amount applied for was and a-half years purchase as the average price of land which had passed through his hands. In the month of March, an estate came before Judge Ross where the landlord, the tenant, and the mortgagee were in agreement to sell a number of second-term rents. The learned Judge preached a sermon on the matter, and said he never would, so long as he was on the bench, allow second term rents to be sold at less than twenty years purchase. There was just indignation in Ireland at the judgment; but the learned Judge was far behind the House of Commons and the hon. and learned Member for York, whose lowest price was twenty-five years purchase. When Judge Ross was refusing seventeen and a-half years purchase for second-term rents, it must be remembered there was no bonus. If it had been shown to him that the landlord would, on that price, get an additional four years out of a bonus, he would have consented to the sale without the slightest hesitation. Judge Ross fixed as the highest limit twenty years purchase, without a bonus. They were now asked to fix it at twenty-two years with a bonus. He waited with the greatest curiosity to hear what defence the Government made to any such suggestion.

Would the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh be surprised to hear that, according to the most recent Return, the average price of all the holdings sold in Armagh was fourteen years purchase. This was not in Mayo, or in the wild regions, but right in the heart of loyal Armagh. In a most useful Return which was published in the early days of the 1891 Act, but, unfortunately, not continued, there was a classification of all the holdings sold, and a reference to that would show that not one of them was sold at a higher price than seventeen years purchase, and it would be seen from that Return that as the size of the holding increased the price, as a rule, decreased. It was absolutely fallacious to say that this Amendment only affected the poorest holdings in Ireland. The Nationalist Party were not concerned only with the poor holdings, they were concerned with all classes of holdings, and they entirely repudiated the idea that the value of the land ever rose to twenty-two years purchase. It had been assumed by many speakers to be a fair and reasonable thing to say that, because a man paid fourteen or fifteen years purchase for a first-term judicial rent in 1892, he should now on the top of that pay a larger number of years purchase on his second-term judicial rent. What was the good of going to the Land Court and getting rents reduced if the Government were going to take away with one hand what they gave with the other. It was a monstrous proposition. If they stood on bare and naked justice the second-term rents were entitled to be taken on the basis and price of the first-term rents ten years ago. The poor wretch who had continued to pay rent all this time and obtained a second-term reduction was now to be told he was to be robbed of that because he was to be treated differently to what he would have been as a first-term tenant ten years ago. So far as he was concerned he honestly desired peace and he did not desire to stand on the principles of extreme justice in this matter provided the tenants got reasonable justice. He earnestly desired peace and fully accepted the position laid down on the previous day by the hon. Member for Cork, that this Bill could be made a great measure of peace and prosperity to Ireland, bringing untold blessings on the people, if the Government would accept the Ashbourne prices. Those prices the people would be willing to give. But he took note of the fact that the first note of discontent and bitterness which had been introduced into this debate had been introduced by the hon. Member for York. The Nationalist Party had shown a genuine desire to make this a lasting peace, and throughout the debate no word of bitterness had come from them. He trusted that the discordant note struck by the hon. Member for York would not be followed, and that the tone and reasoning that had characterised the debate would be continued. If the Government approached this and other Amendments moved from the Irish benches with the earnest desire to meet the almost unanimous wish of the Irish representatives, then, he believed, when this Bill passed into an Act it would open a better and happier chapter in the history of Ireland.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) said that as far as he understood from his speech, the hon. Member for East Mayo was absolutely opposed to this Bill and the settlement arrived at the Land Conference.

MR. DILLON asked the right hon. and gallant Gentleman to quote a passage from his speech bearing out that statement.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON said the hon. Member seemed to forget that there were only two ways of settling the Irish land question—compulsion and inducement. Compulsion was a very simple matter. The landlords would be given two or three years purchase and be turned out. Compulsion was the nostrum of the hon. Member for South Tyrone, who had declared that if they had Home Rule the Irish people would make short work of the Irish landlords.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said he had no settled convictions on that point.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON did not believe the House of Commons would ever adopt a compulsory Bill. The present measure was an attempt to induce landlord and tenant to agree. The mistake of the hon. Member for East Mayo was that he went too much into detail as to the prices recently given for land. Sales in Ireland had completely ceased, and this Bill was a great sales Bill to enable the sales to begin again, and to finish, as far as the House of Commons could, the Irish land question. He did not for a moment say that when this Bill was passed the Irish question would cease to exist. As long as there were Irishmen there would be an Irish question. But he believed *the* Irish question would be settled. Hon. Members on the other side held that the passage of this Bill would further the other political end in which they were interested. He believed exactly the opposite. If he thought it would further Home Rule, he would oppose the Bill with all his power. But he believed that if the land question was settled—as he thought it would be if the Bill were passed more or less in its present shape, the vast majority of the Irish people being thereby enabled to become the owners of the soil they tilled, and the landlords to live in their native land—there would be taken away for ever from the hand of the political agitator in Ireland the lever which he always employed to further his political ends. The proposed limits were vital to the settlement. It was necessary that the transactions should be carried through as quickly and as efficiently as possible, and by a fixing of these limits the long, tiresome, and costly examinations by the Land Commission, which were the great difficulty in land purchase, would be done away with. Once landlord and tenant had fulfilled the law as laid down in this Bill, the tenant would have nothing more to say to the landlord for ever. It was absolutely essential that all the inspection and so forth, which involved incredible delay and kept the tenant out of his holding for an indefinite time, should be got rid of. The question was not what land sold for in Armagh, but what the landlords would take. Substantially they accepted the result of the deliberations of the Dunraven Conference. After his speech of yesterday, he would like to know whether the hon. Member for South Tyrone had gone back on the paper he signed at the Conference.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said that if the Report of the Land Conference were embodied in a Bill, he would not only accept it but fight for it.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON said that made it all the more difficult to understand the hon. Member's speech of yesterday. Under the arrangement of the Land Conference a landlord with £100 a year was to be paid such a sum of money as, if invested at 3¼ per cent., would bring in £90 a year, £10 being knocked off his income for collection and other expenses. At the Conference the hon. Member for South Tyrone agreed to give the landlord £2,800 for his £100 a year; yesterday he was willing to give only eighteen years purchase, or £1,800.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I never said anything of the kind.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON said he understood the hon. Member to express his willingness to give the landlord eighteen years purchase; consequently, he concluded he had changed his mind since signing the Conference Report. The hon. Member for South Tyrone yesterday took a very peculiar line. One might have imagined that at one time he was attacking the landlords for the way they were treating the tenants, and at another time using eloquent words drawing attention to the miserable state of the small tenants in Ireland. But the hon. Member arrived at the climax of his eloquence whilst defending the prospective dangers of the British taxpayer, and the pocket of poor innocent John Bull. The hon. Member's tender desire to look after the purse-strings of the British taxpayer was quite new to him. If the hon. Member would not give the Irish landlord £2,800 for his £100 a year, and would only give him £1,800, he forgot that the additional £1,000 would have to come out of the pocket of John Bull. The line taken by the hon. Member was destructive of the very foundation of this Bill. He had spoken in tragic terms of the difficulties the British taxpayer would have to confront, but it was very strange to him that this anxiety with regard to the future of the British taxpayer should come, not from a Radical, but from a Member sitting on the Ministerial side of the House. There never was an instance in the whole history of Parliament of a Land Bill being brought in that had such universal consent, not only from the Conservatives, but also from the Radicals and the Nationalist Members of the House. The argument of the hon. Member for South Tyrone was met, not by an Irish landlord, but by an English Radical, who pointed out that, after visiting his constituency, he found that they were entirely in favour of this Bill, and in favour of treating the whole question in a generous spirit. That was a state of feeling hitherto unknown in the House of Commons with regard to an Irish Land Bill. The limits of the Bill were most important, and he hoped that the Government would stick to them. Those limits circumscribed the region for bargain. If they had no limit it would be hard to get a bargain closed. The Bill laid down limits within which a bargain could take place, and he hoped the Government would maintain those limits intact. The hon. Member for South-Tyrone talked of agricultural slums. He did not know exactly what he meant by slums. He did not think an Irish tenant who lived upon a holding under £4 valuation would like to be called a slum dweller. In Ireland there were 134,182 persons living upon holdings of £4 and under, and this class would get very little assistance from this Bill. He did not think a reduction of 15 per cent. would affect them very much, but they must not forget that these men had the prospect of calling these small holdings their own. He asked how many working men there were in London, Manchester, or Leeds, or in any of their great towns, who would not be delighted to have a house and two or three acres of land for one shilling a week. [NATIONALIST groans and ironical cheers.] Hon. Members opposite need not groan at that statement.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) said that General Gordon once stated that he would give £1,000 to any man who would live on one of those estates for a week.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON said he would do it willingly. Any ordinary working man would look upon it as a great boon to have a house under those conditions.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: A hovel and nothing to eat.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON said that even an Irishman must have something to eat. Upon this subject the hon. Member for South Tyrone had been carried away by his own eloquence. He appealed to English common sense to judge whether, after all, the life of an Irishman who lived in a slum was altogether an unhappy one. This Bill dealt with those people and held out to them the prospect that ultimately they and those who came after them, would inherit those holdings. This Bill gave the Irish people the prospect that for all time to come they would have a grip of the land on which they and their forefathers had lived. Hon. Members opposite should remember that there were two parties to the contract. They must give fair terms to induce the landlord to sell, and fair terms to the tenant to induce him to buy. It had been said that the landlords were sticking out for a high price, and the hon. Members for Cork and East Mayo seemed to have discovered a new way of dealing with this question, and it was to reduce the second-term rent by 15 per cent. If this Bill passed the majority of Irish tenants would pay 15 per cent. less rent than they were now paying under the second-term rent. He supported this Bill as far as he could, because he believed it would remove many of the difficulties which prevented tenants from buying. He agreed that there were some things in this Bill which would interfere with the action of tenants who might desire to purchase. In order to carry out this policy they must give fair terms to the landlord to induce him to sell, and fair terms to the tenant to induce him to buy. He should support the Bill. If the main details of the Bill were carried out, as he hoped they would, the House would do more to settle the Irish question for all time than anything which had been attempted in past generations.

SIR EDWARD GREY (Northumberland, Berwick) said he rose to make an appeal to the Chief Secretary not to hurry his reply. He suggested that the right hon. Gentleman should weigh very carefully the considerations and the powerful arguments which had been used in favour of the Amendment. He sympathised with the appeal of the right hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh that if the Bill was to work in Ireland a fair price must be offered to the landlords. There was nothing in the Amendment to prevent the tenants from offering a fair price, and he failed to see anything in the arguments to show that if the Amendment were accepted the working of the Bill would be imperilled in Ireland. If the Amendment had been to turn the minimum price into the maximum price allowed, then the arguments of the right hon. Member would have been very apposite; but that was not the Amendment before the Committee. The Amendment was to leave the maximum and to remove the minimum price. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for North Armagh had referred by way of illustration to a man who had a horse to sell, but in that case there was great danger that the seller and buyer would not come to a bargain at all if such a reserve price was put on the horse as to make it impossible to buy. There were really two considerations present to the mind of the Committee. One was the interest of the British taxpayer, and the other was the earnest hope and desire to see the Bill passed in a form in which it would work in Ireland. He thought that everyone on the Opposition side who supported the Second Reading made a considerable point of saying that, while they wished the Bill to go to a Second Reading, there were some points in Committee to which they attached the greatest importance, and unless they were well handled they might affect their whole attitude to the Bill; and this was the salient point which stood out in their minds.

The right hon. Member for Montrose Burghs had selected this point in his speech on the Second Reading as one to which the greatest importance should be attached. He founded himself on the opinions expressed by the right hon. Gentleman and many others. He would deal with the question of the interest of the British taxpayer first. There was no doubt that, great as the majority was for the Second Reading, a considerable amount of apprehension was expressed among Members as to the fear that the taxpayer might be landed with a bad bargain in the transaction. What they wanted to be able to say to the British taxpayer was that they had taken every possible precaution to guarantee that a fair bargain had been made for him. What was a fair bargain? It was a bargain made between a willing seller and a willing buyer, and if the Government maintained this minimum limit price in the Bill there were one or two risks. One was that the Bill might not work in Ireland, and the other was that the land hunger which existed in Ireland, and which had so often got them into trouble, was such as to drive people who were anxious to be buyers into bad bargains. These people would be restricted by the Bill to the knowledge that unless a certain minimum price was offered they could not buy at all, or they must enter into bargains which they were unable or unwilling to meet. If the hard and fast limit of the Bill was retained they would run the risk of a bad bargain being made; and with this minimum limit of price how were hon. Members in a position to defend their case to the British taxpayer, whom they had guaranteed against a bad bargain? They could not guarantee the Bill against unpopularity with the British taxpayer, and their defence must be that the taxpayer was running the least possible risk. But as long as the minimum limit remained in the Bill they could not before the constituencies meet the objection that they had possibly exposed the taxpayer to undue risk; and from that point of view so much importance was attached to the Amendment that he conceived it possible that those who supported the Second Reading might, if the Amendment was not accepted, and if this restriction remained rigid in the Bill, have to reconsider their attitude.

The point to which he attached as much importance was the good working of the Bill in Ireland. Why was the Bill supported almost universally? He believed that the real support behind the Bill arose from the impression made by the Land Conference in Ireland and by the speech of the Chief Secretary appealing to the House to take advantage of this occasion and opportunity. Accepting the view that there was now a great opportunity, the Opposition declined to be responsible in any way for spoiling it. They wished to see that opportunity taken advantage of. Now the question was—Are the Government going to spoil the opportunity? What objection could there be to the removal of the minimum price? There was one only. It was that there might be a danger of widespread combination in Ireland among the tenants to force down prices—in other words, not to bargain, but to extort sale. He did not believe that would be the case. There were two motives lying behind the Bill. First of all, both classes in Ireland were sick of the land struggle; and, secondly, there was before both classes the hope of coming prosperity and of better things, and they were reluctant to see that hope spoiled by continuing the struggle. If that was the spirit in Ireland, there was no danger of the Bill being defeated by a combination of this kind, because such a combination would defeat the working of it. A combination not to bargain but to extort, in order to force prices down would defeat the operation of the measure, and instead of the smooth working of the Bill there would occur the old land struggle in Ireland over again. A much greater danger was that this measure might pass as a timid, halting, incomplete measure. The House could not get free from this land question unless they settled it. Over and over again settlements had failed for want of sympathy or want of knowledge, or want of courage. Here again was a great chance. If the Bill was accepted in Ireland, then he thought that was a defence which he would urge with confidence on any British elector for anything in the Bill which might be unpopular. But the debate showed that the acceptance of the Bill in Ireland was imperilled if the Amendment was rejected.

MR. WYNDHAM said that the right hon. Baronet the Member for Berwick, who on two previous occasions, if not three, had intervened in the discussion on the Irish Land Bill, had that day, as on each of these occasions, made a most impressive speech. He had made a speech which appealed to all who were not less eagerly than himself interested in Ireland, and who saw some chance of making some advance towards a solution of the Irish question. The right hon. Baronet prefaced his speech by an appeal to himself. As a rule when a debate in Committee on a single Amendment had proceeded over one day and part of another, the appeal made to the Government was generally to declare finally and definitely their policy on the point at issue. But so seized was the right hon. Baronet with the gravity of this occasion that his appeal was of a different character, and he asked him not to hurry the reply of the Government, but to weigh well all the arguments adduced in this debate. That being so, it was not to be understood that he rose with the object of asking the Committee to come to an immediate decision, or in order to create the impression that the debate was over. For all that he made no complaint, it would be foolish to make any complaint either of the number of the speeches or their length. He hoped that the succeeding speeches would show the same temper and spirit in which, without a single exception, they had been delivered. It would be his hope not to form the single exception that had hitherto occurred in so satisfactory a state of affairs. But he had to go, in some detail, into the question which the right hon. Baronet had himself described as intricate. He spoke, not as the exponent of any one Party, but for the Government, who wished to find a fair solution—a compromise which would be fair to all the parties interested in this great question. The majority for the Second Reading of the Bill was a large, almost an unprecedented majority. He agreed with the right hon. Baronet in his assumption that that support was given because all who sat in the House hoped that this Bill would crown the expectations raised at the Land Conference. He hoped that their action would not injure but increase the happy effect of that Land Conference. The danger was that in this Bill they might fail in that attempt; that they might disappoint both one or the other of the parties. The fact must be kept in mind that two great interests were represented at that Conference, but it must also be kept in mind that the British taxpayer was not represented; and they must keep in mind that they ought not to minimise the fact that the great corporate bodies, which had enormous sums invested in mortgages on Irish land, were likewise not represented at the Conference. He did not think that any hon. Member would take exception to that brief description of the difficult position in which they were placed in arriving at a happy conclusion on so complicated a matter.

Might he ask the Committee to go back for a moment and to go over the ground carefully and somewhat slowly. What was the position? They found that there was a universal desire in Ireland that a peasant proprietary should be created, that dual ownership should be abolished, that those who occupied the soil should own the soil. And they found that the many earnest efforts which had been made in that direction showed a decided tendency to have the very opposite effect. He must respond to the challenge addressed to him by the hon. Member for East Mayo. That hon. Gentleman went back to the debate of last year and impeached certain figures which he had laid before the House on that occasion. He was then concerned to show, as a justification for coming to the House of Commons and to the representatives of the British constituencies, that a policy, which sought to produce many good effects, was ceasing to produce these good effects. The hon. Member for East Mayo then directly challenged the figures which he gave, and he used the word "application." He was careful last year to point out that true test which was to be found in the originating notices. The figures which he gave last year and which the hon. Gentleman impeached were perfectly accurate. Then the hon. Gentleman went on to say that he did not find in that Return any confirmation of his argument. But from the Return of the last four years it would be found that the numbers were 6,300, 4,900, 3,400 and 2,300.

Mr. DILLON said that the right hon. Gentleman was leaving out altogether the 40th Section cases and the Congested Districts Board cases.

Mr. WYNDHAM said he would remind the hon. Member that if he had given a closer study to his speech the hon. Member would have found that the purchases had not shown a decline under the 40th Section cases or in the Congested Districts Board cases, because by these cases whole estates could be bought. He had founded his argument on the fact that any diminution in the ordinary purchase classes found no counterpart at all in the operations of the Congested Districts Board; and if he had gone further this year he could have brought the figures up to date, making the number of originating notices—the first movement towards purchase—from April to December last year 1,504, or only 2,005 if the average were taken, and from 1898 to 1899, 7,719. He thought he was bound to give that reply to the argument of the hon. Member. The figures of last year might have suffered some diminution under the shadow of some anticipated legislation this year; but the purchases under existing Acts were declining in Ireland. It was indubitable that the purchases were anything but increasing. It was indubitable that the landlords were prepared to sell if some reasonable arrangement could be arrived at. And that was the justification for this Bill. Now, if that were so, some attempt at a settlement was incumbent upon the Government. They had taken one form of settlement largely because they had gone as nearly as they could, with the resources at their disposal, to the form of settlement recommended by the Conference. But when this question of price was used for all that it was worth—viz., the number of years purchase which the tenants gave, he would remind the hon. Member that they could have had a solution perhaps not acceptable to Ireland, but still a solution, which would have absolved this Assembly from the charge of neglecting the matter altogether. They might have said that if the tenant would pay so much less than the second-term rents, the State undertook the responsibility of paying off the remainder, but that would not have been acceptable in Ireland, although it would still have been a perfectly possible manner of settling the question. They might have said to the tenantry of Ireland, "We give you what you desire, the magic of ownership and freedom from any litigation in the future; and we give that to you at a yearly sum which will enable you to survey the future with equanimity." There were very few countries in the world, with the exception of the United States, which could have ever attempted a solution on these lines. It was not many days ago that a distinguished diplomatist said to him—

> "It is only in England that you could come forward with an offer of £100,000,000 on credit, and a bonus of £12,000,000 in addition to buy out the landlords. Elsewhere the thing would have had to be financed on other lines; probably you would have had to lay a fixed rent charge on all the holdings."

Therefore, the Government had done their best in this matter to finance the situation in order to arrive at a result which, according to the right hon. Baronet, and almost every speaker, must be achieved—viz., a settlement which would be satisfactory to the landlords and tenants in Ireland.

When hon. Members spoke of the Ashbourne compromise, and wished to discuss this question on terms, he did not think that was the most convenient manner—to put it no higher than that. In the first place, the hon. Member for East Mayo had admitted that they had only averages to go on —only the averages of the counties to go on, but these averages went through every kind of rent which existed in Ireland, and that was not a satisfactory basis. The sound basis, he thought, was to consider, in respect to the landlords, what income they must enjoy in the future if they were expected to sell, and to consider, in respect to the tenants, what price per annum they could pay without any risk to themselves, and therefore without risk to the State, in order to own their land and be free from litigation in the future. He might not have taken a happy point of departure, but hon. Members would admit that he had made an honest endeavour, and that was the point of departure which the Government took. It was also the point of departure which the Land Conference took. He was not going to use the Land Conference as a dialectic weapon. It was a most important event. It represented an aspiration—an aspiration, however, which could not become concrete unless the Government gave effect to it. But he thought the hon. and learned Member pressed the counter-argument too far when he said that if the Government had sanctioned everything recommended in the Conference, there would have been no further difficulty. He admitted that they had not given to the tenants of Ireland decadal reductions, but, short of that, they had given the tenants everything recommended by the Land Conference. On the other hand, they had given to the Land Board the possibility of enabling the landlords to get far more than the Conference Report thought they should receive if they were to be expected to sell wholesale without important exceptions.

Under this Bill the immediate effect to the landlord was the loss of income, and the immediate effect to the tenant was an increase. The landlord got less, and the tenant had to pay less. He must ask the Committee to bear in mind that the terms under which money was lent for the purpose of this Bill were of such a character that the tenant could pay a higher sum to his landlord, and, at the same time, have to pay a less sum each year. There was a danger, however, in this matter that they might tempt the tenants to make improvident bargains. Many tenants in Ireland had told him that they would pay their second-term rent as long as was demanded (if they could own the land) without any diminution at all. He had taken precautions against any such bargains being made in the Bill. Under the Ashbourne Act, in order to give a landlord £2,500 for an estate of £100 rental, the tenant would have to pay the whole of his rent without any diminution at all, but, under the provisions of this Bill, the tenant would get a reduction of about 20 per cent. There was no juggling in this matter because there was no concealment. It was very material to a person wishing to buy if he could borrow money at a very favourable rate. It was an important element in the question for the tenant to be put in such a position as to be able to get the necessary sum without contracting an obligation which was risky both to him and to the British taxpayer. This Bill induced people to come to an arrangement which matured to both their advantages and enabled the landlord to receive a much larger sum than he would otherwise, without imposing greater risks upon the tenants. This Bill would not lead to bargains being sanctioned of a dangerous character to the State. The question of security was not the great question. The question of the law's delay, and of the intricacies that embarrassed and tied up all their efforts to guarantee land purchase had a more important and more direct bearing on the problem before them. In this Bill, if in any Bill, they must seek for expedition. The speech of the hon. Member for East Mayo was that of a man who was prepared to wait some years more rather than close with a bargain with which he did not altogether approve.

MR. DILLON: I said I would wait many more years before I would close with a bargain for twenty-five years purchase.

MR. WYNDHAM retorted that that was not the Bill before the House. This Bill provided incidentally for twenty-two years purchase of second-term rents, and for something over eighteen years purchase of first-term rents. He held that the reduction of the amount the tenant was to pay was more important to the tenant than the amount which the landlord was to receive. No doubt the amount the landlord was to receive was an all-important matter to him, and it was a very important matter to the landlord's creditors—the corporate body who held mortgages on the estate. The first object of the Bill was to hasten the operation of purchase. The hon. Member for East Mayo had correctly stated that great delay was not involved in the inspection of the holdings but in the legal investigations. The point of this Bill was that they allowed the purchase to go forward, and adjourned the legal investigation, having obtained sufficient securities. The next point to be considered was the security to the taxpayer, and the third point was "congestion." He held that the Bill went a very long way towards enabling purchase transactions to be carried forward swiftly, that it gave ample security to the taxpayer, and that it attempted to deal with the problem of congestion. If there were to be no maximum reduction he was confident that they would relapse, against their will and desire, into the old procedure of the Land Estates Court. Even if an attempt were made to prevent that by positive enactment in the Bill, those who had large claims upon Irish land would say that there was no wrong without a remedy in law; and they would go to the highest Courts in the land to prevent a wrong being inflicted upon them. But there were further advantages in having a maximum price. If there were no maximum price we exposed those who voted for the Second Reading of the Bill to a great disappointment. There might be a great discrepancy between the terms upon two adjoining estates of a similar character. That was a danger against which he was bound to guard. The hon. and learned Member for Waterford did not think that was a danger. He hoped it might never occur, but let it be supposed that it did. Let it be supposed that a limited owner sold his estate for six or seven years purchase and went off to Boulogne with the bonus, and that on a neighbouring estate a landlord, equally willing to sell, but with a sense of his responsibility, stated that unless he received £2,500 or £2,600 for every £100 he could not meet the demands to which he was liable. On these contiguous estates there would be some tenants paying instalments very much lower than the payments made by others. If such trouble arose, could anything be more calculated to confirm the suspicions with which many people regarded this whole policy of land purchase in Ireland?

The hon. and learned Member's Amendment was an omnibus Amendment, and those who were anxious to pass the Bill rapidly must feel obliged to him for raising so many important points in one Amendment. In the first place the hon. and learned Member would make the minimum reduction larger. He would lay it down that the reduction on second-term rents must always be 15 per cent. instead of 10, and on first-term rents always 25 per cent. instead of 20. He could not accept that part of the Amendment. Only on Monday afternoon the Government was urged to increase the maximum sum which might be advanced from £5,000 to some higher figure in order to bring in a somewhat limited class—namely, the farmers of great tillage farms. He then declined to make that change on the ground that the taxpayer ought not to be asked to use his credit in cases where the persons to be benefited were obviously wealthy and able to make an effort on their own behalf. After what had occurred, could he deliberately alter the Bill to prevent these very men paying 10 per cent. less than they now paid if they wished to do so? He would not have a Parliamentary leg to stand on if he did so. If he gave way on that point, and possibly, having considered it, he might be able to arrive at some decision in the matter, he could not say that a man was not to pay £90 instead of £100 if he wished. Again, the argument which had been used about poor farmers being exposed to undue pressure did not agree with other arguments that had been used in Committee, because it had been urged that it was necessary to increase the maximum reduction. He had in his mind a case where the sale took place of some first-term rents in 1886 or 1887. At that time land purchase was in its initial state, and the Land Commissioners were afraid to make any advance if there was any possibility of the purchase breaking down, In that case, the Land Commissioners approved some 240 bargains, and rejected 40 or 50 others on the ground that the price was too high. Those who bought eighteen years ago secured a substantial reduction of their annual obligation, while those who were precluded from buying had obtained smaller reductions than their neighbours. The latter had remained on friendly terms with their landlords, who had joined them in a petition to have the case reopened. He hoped the Committee would think that was a serious argument. Everybody, of course, would like to arrive at an ideal solution in every case, but that was not possible. The attempt to provide a safeguard against every conceivable risk defeated one's object. The true remedy, the ideal remedy, for a really bad holding was not, he maintained, to sell it to a man a little bit cheaper, so that he paid a few shillings less a year, but to give him a better holding.

He hoped hon. Members would not think that he did not appreciate the difficulties in these cases. He had travelled in these parts of Ireland and spoken to these men. He was convinced that ten shillings a year did not better their case. He was equally convinced that the House ought in that Bill to see if it could provide that the holdings should be amalgamated and these slums should by a gradual process be dealt with. Small holdings, even though they might be on the poorest soil, did not constitute a slum; that term would be more properly applied to a number of holdings upon which the whole population were on the verge of poverty, and where a man was in such circumstances that he could not improve his condition. That was a greater problem than that of the isolated farm, and he had endeavoured to deal with it in another part of the Bill by giving to the Land Commissioners the power to define what was an estate. It would be the duty of the Commissioners to have some kind of inspection. The holdings in which these uneconomic features were pronounced could be seen by anyone who passed, and in his opinion it would be the duty of the Commissioners in such cases to make use of the liberal provisions in the Bill for putting untenanted lands at the disposal of the Estates Commissioners in order that there might be some amalgamation and migration when this evil occurred in a very acute form. That was the best plan. The ideal could not always be secured in this world. Possibly in some cases the necessary land would not be available. In such cases, rather than the men being kept out of the benefits of purchase, was it not better that they should pay possibly £3 10s. instead of £3 2s. 6d.? If the maximum reduction was abolished they would drift back into the disappointing paths of the Landed Estates Court. Where second-term rents had been fixed there was no sounder foundation for any legislation of this character. Hard cases, in which there were arrears, had been instanced. But they would be more *ad rem* in the case of non-judicial tenants. It might be said in those cases in which there was no basis of second-term rents to go upon that the Government did not know how many there were, or what rents they were paying, or that some of them were non-judicial tenants because they had been deterred from going to court. He did not admit that such cases were frequent; he was not aware even that they existed; but at any rate it could be urged that some non-judicial tenants were in the happy position of having kept out of Court by their landlord treating them uncommonly well. On the other hand there were non-judicial tenants who had not gone into Court because their holdings were so poor that they were not worth going to law about at all.

In the first clause of the Bill the Government had sought to embrace as much as possible for the sake of expedition and to avoid the law's delay, but they had not been able to embrace anything like every form of tenancy within the zones. There were thirteen exceptions from the Bill as at present drafted, and he would not definitely say that a case could not be made out for adding others to the list, but it would need a very strong case for that to be done. In the arguments which had been addressed to the Committee he had not been able to find any reason for departing from the principle of the maximum limit on second-term rents, or for altering that limit, but he was perfectly prepared to listen to any pleas which could be put in in the sense that there might be classes which ought to be left out of the zones and added to the list of those which were already excluded.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said the cases he had quoted were from returns embodied in the *Dublin Gazette*, and were marked "refused." According to the Chief Secretary they were not refused at all, but withdrawn. But even on the right hon. Gentleman's own case, here was an estate in County Limerick which the landlord agreed to sell for £11,441, but for which under the Bill the lowest price that could be taken was £13,900, while it might go up to £17,000. That clearly showed that the real object of the Bill was to improve the price of land.

MR. WYNDHAM was understood to say that the parties agreed to disagree on the old terms, but agreed on the terms that the same net sum should be paid.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL contended that under the Bill the Commissioners would have to sanction the sale for £13,000 or £17,000 if that price were agreed upon; there was no power of refusal. A Bill of which that could be said was open to most serious objection, as it would tempt and allow a purchaser to pay a price not only dangerous to himself but also involving the State. The accusation of having expressed himself against the landlords getting eighteen years purchase was a gross misrepresentation of anything he had ever said either in the House of Commons or in the country. There had never been any concealment of his disagreement with the Nationalist Members as to the price the tenant ought to pay. He had repeatedly stated that ordinary second-term tenants could very well afford to pay twenty-three years purchase and yet make a good bargain. In addition to that, the landlord was to get three years bonus, and that ought to satisfy him. But he had never said anything about eighteen years purchase. On the contrary, he had said the landlords were entitled to twenty-three years purchase of the second-term rents. With three years bonus in addition he thought the thing could be settled, the landlords would be very well off, and the State would have ample security.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) expressed his deep regret at the conclusion of the speech of the Chief

Secretary. It was quite evident that, so far as this most vital point in the whole Bill was concerned, they had come to the parting of the ways. The attitude of the Irish Party, as embodied in the Amendment, was founded upon what they and those whom they represented, believed to be absolutely essential if the Bill was to carry out its great promise of affording a real settlement of this question. They were bound, therefore, to stand by the Amendment, and to support it in the Division Lobby, and to invite to its support all those Members who really desired to see the Bill settle the land question. In maintaining this attitude they could not be open to misrepresentation or reproach from any quarter of the House. The risks he and others had taken, the responsibilities they had assumed, and the lengths to which they had gone in their desire to bring about a compromise on this question, were sufficient to protect them from the possibility of being misunderstood in the attitude they were now taking up. No man living was more anxious than he to see an immediate and complete settlement of this land quarrel, and it was impossible to exaggerate the frightful consequences which must ensue in Ireland if the country was plunged back once more into the conflict which they had hoped was over for ever. No earthly consideration could induce him to take any step that would endanger the immediate future of this measure except the most profound conviction that unless some Amendment was made in this clause, the Bill would not carry out the prospects which had been held out. The Chief Secretary's speech if it meant anything meant an absolute *non possumus.* He listened to that speech not only with the deepest possible regret but with alarm, for he could not conceive that the right hon. Gentleman would have met this claim with a *non possumus.* He did not say that it was in the power of any man to propose a compromise which could meet their demand, but to meet them with a *non possumus* excited his amazement. He could only hope that the right hon. Gentleman, when he said that his rising was not to be taken as a desire to end the discussion, and that after he had spoken he would listen to further arguments, meant that he had given his mind to this matter in a conciliatory way, and that before the discussion ended they might hear something more from him on this point. He confessed that this refusal imperilled very seriously the prospects of the Bill, and also imperilled the hope of this measure effecting anything in the nature of a settlement. He could not conceive that the Chief Secretary's attitude had been fully developed. He knew how much the passing of this Bill meant to the Chief Secretary—he did not mean to his position, credit, and renown as a statesman, although it meant a great deal in that respect, but he knew how much it meant to him in another way. He knew the right hon. Gentleman was quite sincere in his desire to settle the Irish land question, and he knew what a poignant disappointment it would be if his Bill failed. He could not conceive that the right hon. Gentleman had developed his own mind upon this subject.

He had risen simply to point to the serious nature of the position which had arisen, and to beg all those hon. Members who would further take part in this debate to use the opportunity they had to impress upon the Government that before this debate ended they must have some further declaration on this point. They could not leave the matter as it stood at present, because what would happen would be that there would be a division in which the sharpest possible conflict of opinion would be disclosed, and upon which on one side there would be the whole Irish representation with the exception of those sitting on the Treasury bench and the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh. They would have 95 per cent. of the Irish representatives declaring that this Amendment was necessary for a settlement on the one side, and on the other side they would have a majority of some sort or other made up entirely of English Members. That recalled their past lamentable history. Why was it that in fifty years they had had forty Land Bills, every one of which had failed? Why was it that all their greatest statesmen time after time had committed themselves to a settlement, as they thought, of the Irish land problem, and had had, year after year, to come forward and admit that they were mistaken and that the time of Parliament had been wasted? Simply because upon these questions Irish opinion had been overborne and disregarded, and they had acted in this matter in the belief, which was the evil at the bottom of the whole system of Government in Ireland, that English opinion was more qualified to deal with Ireland than Irish opinion. He had read a speech delivered in Sligo by the new Lord Lieutenant who, since he came to Ireland, had shown liberality and broadmindedness and an anxiety to understand the Irish question. He declared in that speech that one necessity of government in Ireland, in his opinion, was that Irish affairs should be settled by Irish and not by English opinion. In the face of that declaration was the House of Commons in its forty-first or forty-second Land Bill going to make the same mistake as in all the others, that was of disregarding Irish opinion even when it came to the bar of this House absolutely united? They found now Unionist Members from Ireland and Nationalist Members holding the same views. He did not know whether it was any use his concluding by appealing to the Chief Secretary, but he expressed his earnest desire that before this debate concluded the right hon. Gentleman would be able to add something to what he had already said, and thus relieve them from a position which, if persevered in, would make it impossible for them to represent this Bill to the Irish people as one which would settle the Irish land question. Everybody knew how he personally was committed to this Bill. Everybody knew how anxious he was to be able to make such a representation to the Irish people. Everybody knew how during the last few months he had gone to extreme lengths defending this Bill and the policy which lay at the bottom of it, and unless the right hon. Gentleman could see his way to go further he could not say truthfully to the Irish people that this Bill would fulfil the hopes which had been raised in Ireland or that it would settle the Irish land question.

SIR ROBERT REID (Dumfries Burghs) said he wished to say a few words, because if the right hon. Gentleman persisted in his opposition to this Amendment there was a risk of this measure being lost altogether. He had known at least half a-dozen occasions of this kind in the House of Commons where appeals had been made by Irish Members that their views should be allowed to predominate, and in most cases that request had been ignored. Scotch Members supported this Bill on the ground that it would provide a real settlement of this question, and to achieve this they had consented to the payment of a large sum of money, amounting to no less than £12,000,000 sterling to a class of whom he wished to say no evil, but who were not any more deserving than the people of this country. They did this to purchase peace, and he believed their constituents had supported and would support them in that course. Hon. Members from Ireland objected to this proposal, and Scotch Members objected to it quite as much. For his part he had always felt that unless an Amendment of this character, which seemed to him to be vital, was accepted it would be the duty of some of them to oppose instead of support this Bill. What was wanted was that there should be behind this Bill the goodwill of the House of Commons as a whole, and surely that could not be achieved except by considering very seriously an Amendment of this kind. English and Scotch Members had looked at this matter from two points of view. In the first place they thought this Amendment was required in order to give better security for the money advanced by the British Exchequer. He understood that it was necessary to have a maximum price, but what was the value of a minimum price. A minimum price impaired the security of the British taxpayer and the prospects of peace which they hoped to achieve by this Bill. All that was asked was that the parties should not be restricted from selling at a lower price than that specified in the Bill. If the buyer and seller were content what harm could be done. The British Exchequer would be safeguarded. It has been suggested that the mortgagor might sell and leave his mortgagees unprovided for altogether. Surely they might require that notice should be given to the mortgagees. Such a case would very seldom happen. He did not think that they ought to regard the proposal of the Government as satisfactory, because the landlords appeared to be pressing the right hon. Gentleman upon this point, and they wanted to get inflated instead of real prices. He thought the British Exchequer had done more than enough already. They were giving the landlords an enormous gratuity, and many facilities for selling and then buying back their own demesnes. He did not think the prospect of this Bill ought to be jeopardised by insisting upon a limitation of that kind. He did not think the Irish landlords were so infatuated with this proposal as to refuse to come to terms even if this Amendment were accepted. The right hon. Gentleman at the end of his speech said that he might be prepared to accept some modification. What did he mean by that? It was not his business to make suggestions, but did he mean that tenancies below a certain fixed value should be exempted from the operation of the minimum price? The right hon. Gentleman ought to give some further explanation, and he appealed to the Chief Secretary in as strong a manner as he could, not to lose this favourable opportunity of settling this question by unwisely adhering to a detail of this kind, which he believed was not in the least degree essential to the principle of his Bill, and the obstinate retention of which would produce most disastrous and serious results.

Mr. WOOD (Down, E.) expressed regret at the position taken up by the Chief Secretary for Ireland. He had been one of the foremost in supporting the Amendment put forward by the hon. and learned Member for Waterford, and he desired to say that the Amendment had the support of the farmers of Ulster, and that not a single farmers' representative or Ulster representative dared enter his protest against it. In Ulster, of course, they were acquainted with the attitude taken up by the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh. He had been true to his past career, and he was true to it to-day. They expected nothing better, and they were not disappointed. But the hon. and gallant Member represented what was practically a town constituency, and not an agricultural constituency. In Ulster they had had their difficulties. His hon. friend the Member for South Tyrone, it might be said, had gone too far in his desire to settle this question. He himself told the House, and he warned the Government, that to persist would mean in Ulster another Tipperary. Let it be distinctly understood that on this question they were not prepared to recede. Did the Government think that the people of Ulster did not know what was going on here, and that they did not recognise the death rattle in the throats of the Members sitting on the Treasury Bench. Did they think that the people of Ulster were going to accept this Bill with the knowledge that the day was not far distant when there might be a new King in Egypt, who would have no acquaintance with Joseph. They knew this, and they were determined to assert their rights, and to ask in this House the recognition of the rights and privileges to which they were entitled. This Amendment gave these. It protected the tenant from being compelled by the landlord to pay a price far beyond the reasonable legitimate and equitable price that the landlord was entitled to. This very Government in the Act of 1887 inserted a provision giving relief to tenants who were compelled to take leases at exorbitant rents. The people had had experience of landlords in the past; they were the same to-day as they were yesterday. It was true that if they were not killed their fangs were taken out by the Act of 1881, but they were able still to drive unfair and unreasonable bargains with the tenants who were in arrears with rent.

It might be well for the House to understand that he had already defeated the Government in his own constituency on their proposals for land purchase, and he told the Government now that if they persisted in this conduct it would not be at all a difficult matter to defeat them at the next election. He held in his hand a letter from Mr. Somerset Ward, agent for large estates in Down, which was written to a man who had the hardihood to go into Court to avail himself of the Land Acts which formed the law of the land in Ireland. The letter was in the following terms—

"Estate Office,
"Downpatrick, 25*th April*, 1903.
"Mr. James McIlroy,
"Quoil, Downpatrick.

"Sir,—I regret to say your action in having a fair rent fixed on a holding which was let as a townpark, on the ground that your father was not a resident in the town, compels me to serve you with a notice to quit, in respect of the townpark which you hold under agreement dated 20th February, 1887.—Yours faithfully,

"SOMERSET WARD."

That was the position of an Irish landlord and his agent to-day. That was one of the gentlemen who would be asking later on for compensation at the expense of the British taxpayer. This was conduct which was still being pursued throughout his own constituency. These death warrants, as the late Mr. Gladstone called them, were being served throughout County Down, because tenants were unable to pay the first statutory rents which were fixed. They were being driven out under the Land Acts which provided such a price for the landlord that the tenants could not pay. Unless the claims of the tenants were met in a spirit of fair play and reasonableness the Government would fail, and it would not be difficult or troublesome to advise the tenantry of Ulster to refuse to purchase under this Act and to wait for the day not far distant, when a Government would come into office which would attend to their just and equitable claims.

MR. MOULTON (Cornwall, Launceston) said he could not allow this debate to pass without joining his protest against the provision with which this Bill commenced. He felt great difficulty in speaking to the House upon it, because he felt so strongly that he had difficulty in moderating his language and treating it merely as a question on which two opinions could be honestly held. He sometimes thought that the introduction of this clause must have been based, on the part of the Government, upon a study of the weaknesses of mankind, and especially the intellectual weaknesses. He could not believe that they would have put forward a clause like this if they had not been certain that the point was too intricate for the English people to understand, and that they trusted this attempt to waste public money on their political supporters might pass undetected. He wanted to put a few figures to the House on what the nature of this proposal of the Government was when looked at accurately. Experience had shown that the average number of years purchase Irish land was worth, was about eighteen; that was to say, if they changed it from the number of years purchase into the rate per cent., the security of Irish land was worth about 5½ per cent. Now the Government was going to lend money at 2¾ per cent. That was just half the rate per cent. it was worth, and if there was no question but that of purchase, they would be entitled to say that the tenants must have their rents exactly halved. If the Committee looked at the figures in the Bill it would be found that the average deduction which the tenants ought to receive who purchased their land under this Act, was 40 per cent, but by this clause the Government said that they should never have more than 30, and that they might have as little as 10. In other words, this clause said that not in the extremest case should there be that deduction which arose on purchase under the Ashbourne Acts as shown by the average rate of purchase of Irish land. The lowest number of years purchase for which any penny under this Bill was to be used was twenty-two years purchase, and yet the average under the previous Acts was eighteen. Therefore the Government were giving at least four, and probably more years purchase to the landlords above what experience had shown was the fair price. He listened during the greater part of yesterday to the debate, and he had examined the speeches as reported, to find one tittle of justification for this largess for the Irish landlords out of public money on the part of the Government. If it was simply a question of throwing away public money probably a protest against a great part of the Bill would cover this; but he wanted to point out an evil which came from it which was of the gravest character.

Up to now the money we had been lending for the purchase of Irish land had been protected because the Land Commission had to be satisfied that the security was sufficient for the money that we lent. That safeguard was now removed, and yet the Chief Secretary for Ireland, when bringing in the Bill, pleaded for its acceptance because he said that, of all the money we had lent for the purpose of the purchase of Irish land, practically no instalment had failed to be paid duly at the proper time. Ah yes, but these were instalments upon purchase money which was not too big for the security. If it was not too big for the security, there was adequate inducement and adequate means for the tenant to pay the instalments as they became due. What justification was that for the introduction of a Bill in which there was something like 25 per cent. added to the fair value of the holding, a great part of which came upon the tenant and not only on the British taxpayer? The tenants would not be subject to the protective provision of a fair rent fixed by the Courts. And so they started this Bill with an exorbitant amount lent to the tenant and an exorbitant amount required from the tenant, which would by no means lead to the same result as the equitable purchase money and instalments under the Ashbourne Acts had fortunately reached in every case up to the present. When the Government had deliberately increased by this means the purchase money which the landlord would require, it was almost incredible to think that they were going to risk £120,000,000 under circumstances which previous experience had shown brought an inadequate security. Previous experience had shown that in no less than 2,000 cases they had had to refuse the proposal for purchase because the security was inadequate. Every one of these must be acceded to if this Bill passed, and the consequence was that they were asked to lend this enormously increased sum on security that the Bill took care would be insufficient. And therefore the Bill took care that trouble should arise in the future, not because the tenants would not, but because they could not, pay the exaggerated sum which they would be required to pay because we wanted to overpay the landlord.

He asked what possible excuse there could be for such an outrageous provision. He understood the only excuse was that if they left the parties to free bargain there would be a wide difference in the prices. So there ought to be. The land in Ireland was of very various kinds and held under very various circumstances; and it was very natural that there should be differences in prices. Was it to be thought that they were going to lessen the dissatisfaction in Ireland by putting up the whole of the price the tenants were going to pay? Why did they not commence equalising the prices by putting down the prices they gave to the landlords? This was a voluntary Bill. The landlords had surrendered nothing. It was an option to them whether they should avail themselves of it, and the consequence was that if they had said that they would not spend English money on land that would be sold at over eighteen years purchase they would not have perilled the landlords one penny. What justification was it to say that they insisted that the whole benefit of the Bill should be an exaggerated price to the landlords, when they knew that there was a temptation to the tenants to accept purchase even under these onerous circumstances, because, at all events, they for the moment got a little lessening of their rents. It was true that the tenants gave up the great protection of the right to a fair rent, but he was afraid that in many parts of Ireland the struggle was so great that they dared not look forward to the future but only to the to-day or the immediate morrow; and they were bound to accept purchase if they could not get their landlords to be more reasonable, if it were at any price, trusting that some Government might arise in England equitable enough not to enforce unjust payments from them. The consequence was that if they had fixed a limit so as to lower the price that would have done no injustice; and now they had fixed it at a limit to do injustice. Another consequence was that all the landlords, whose cases were the worst would be the first to avail themselves of this Bill.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) said he wished to refer to the considerations which underlay the clause. The clause itself he disliked very much, taking it as a whole. He thought it was a needless clause—a clause which never would have been heard of but for the Land Conference Report. He was not going to criticise that Report, but it was undoubtedly the case that the suggestion of zones of prices had never been dreamt of by anybody until they read it for the first time in the Land Conference Report. If they went back to the original days when purchase was first discussed; if they went back to Select Committees, although they were manned by landlords and appointed by Conservative Governments; if they went back to the Ashbourne Acts, when a more liberal spirit prevailed, never did anyone hear of or suggest any idea of zones of prices in a voluntary Bill until the Land Conference Report. Therefore, so far as the Government had sinned in adopting the zones of prices, they had sinned in the company of Gentlemen on this side of the House and on the other side—their own supporters; and its defence was, as he understood, that under the name of a voluntary Bill, this Bill must largely have compulsory effects. He agreed with the contention that it was possible that this Bill might, in some cases, have compulsory effects, and that the suggestion of zones of prices might be justified by that fact. But there was also in the Land Conference Report another principle which he took to be at the root of the position of the Government, viz., that the tenants' representatives there agreed to give the landlords their net income less 10 per cent. Now, that was a tremendous concession on the part of the tenants. He had never criticised those of his friends who were parties to that concession; but it was a concession of the utmost magnitude so far as the tenant farmers of Ireland were concerned. It was suggested—and he should like the right hon. Gentleman to absolve himself from the responsibility for it—that the tenants' representatives were, to some extent, entrapped into that position by a hint or promise, or a vague hope held out, that if the tenants' representatives agreed to give the landlords their full net income, the Government—as lord Dunraven, as he understood, was in touch with the right hon. Gentleman—would be prepared to make up the difference. But he could only say that if any such suggestion was held out to the tenants' representatives, and that they were entrapped into making the concession which they did to the landlords, then he could well understand the very serious speech which his hon. friend the Member for Waterford—whom he had always endeavoured to support in this House—had just addressed to the Committee. Now the Government, he thought, should make some allowance for the seriousness of that utterance. The tenants' representatives believed that they had gone a very long way on the road of concession. They also saw that they had exposed themselves from would-be extremists on their own side, to the charge of weakness. They felt that they had exposed themselves to the attacks and criticisms of politicians who said of the Irish the well-known phrase, that "Codling was their friend, not Short"; and that if other people had been at that conference, they would have obtained far better terms for the Irish people.

He had heartily supported the position taken up by his hon. friends, because they believed that they did their best in a very difficult and serious situation. But the Government must remember that outside this House there were journals and organs which affected to speak for the tenants, which were perpetually engaged in the flagellation of his friends on charges that they had not done their best in the interests of the tenants; that in fact the true level of price was the old Ashbourne level, that anything which increased the burden on the tenants beyond that, really amounted to a betrayal of the interests of the tenant farmers. Now, for himself, he must candidly say that as the majority of the tenants were men paying £10 or £12 rents, and as the only difference between his hon. friend in his Amendment and the Government proposal was a question of 5 per cent., which in the case of a £10 holder would only mean a few shillings, which could be made up by one hen laying a halfpenny egg additional—he should not himself, as regarded the poorer class of tenants—if they were able to discuss this question *in vacuo*, so to speak—attach the tremendous importance which the hon. Gentleman the Member for Waterford had done to his Amendment in its present form. But he confessed that he did attach tremendous importance to the passing of this Bill, and to any interruption in the hopes of a settlement. He did attach very considerable importance to any conflict or division between the Irish Members and the Government, which would endanger or imperil the passage of this measure. English Members were always willing to pass coercion Bills for Ireland; they were always going down the inclined plane; but when passing remedial measures for Ireland they were unwilling to give a helping hand to pull the car up the hill. Therefore, unless the Bill was cordially accepted on this side of the House, he could well understand the apprehensions of the English people in regard to this offer of £12,000,000 to the Irish Members.

After the crisis of last week the Government might not be sitting where it was but for the fear of the Irish people that a Bill of this kind might once more be flung into the waste-paper basket. He approached this question on the one hand with a sincere desire to meet the views of the Chief Secretary on this Amendment, and on the other hand with the sincere desire that this House—which had acted kindly, courageously, and even generously from the English point of view, although the Irish people thought they were only getting their due—should do nothing in any way to impair or affect the passing of the Bill. He had listened with great attention to the speech of the Chief Secretary, and he very well knew the immense difficulties that had to be encountered. It was a great misfortune to be a lawyer. In a case like this he might know both sides. One could always agree better and more strenuously if they knew only one side, and that was the reason why he believed a well-balanced mind should never address itself to a partisan assembly like the House of Commons. The right hon. Gentleman had made a case that the landlord was in some instances not the landlord at all. He was a limited owner having behind him, perhaps, the remainder man, or in front of him, perhaps, the mortgagee or whatever it might be, and above him the superior or head landlord. Yet under this Bill they were not only enabling the limited owner to sell the fee simple, but also to pocket the whole of the bonus. They were giving a man who did not own the land the right to sell it; and they were paying him for doing so. Under those circumstances there must be some protection to the people who owned the other interests in the land. That might be done without a system of minimum price. If they gave notice to the remainder man, the mortgagee, and the head landlord, they would find themselves at once in a maze of intricacies which would postpone a settlement of the question for years. If any one wanted to get some idea of the hopeless, waterlogged, submerged position into which the Irish estates had gone, they ought to spend a week or a fortnight in the Irish Landed Estates Court—the most melancholy Court in the world. He thought the Government were putting too large a plaster on a small sore. The Bill was a violent interference with the landlord's rights, because it said to a man who was neither encumbered nor had a superior landlord over him, "You shall not sell your estate except at a given price."

What was the way out of the position? He disliked the whole clause. He said to himself this Bill of eighty or ninety clauses might be condensed if they adopted the French method of drafting. The whole Bill could be made to read as follows: "Article 1.—The sum of £12,000,000 is hereby allocated to facilitate land purchase in Ireland under the Purchase Acts. Article 2.—The Estate Commission are hereby constituted with power to make rules as to the repayment of purchase instalments, and the extinction of superior interests, or otherwise to facilitate sales between landlord and tenant. Article 3.—That A. B. C. and D. are charged with the execution of this duty." This form would not take the House of Commons as long to discuss as the present Bill, but by giving power to the Estate Commissioners, or some such method of escape, they would get rid of all entanglements. Unless the Chief Secretary was constrained and held by some unseen hand, why did he not come forward and yield to the general wish of the House of Commons? If there were Members of the House of Lords in the Cabinet, they had a House of their own in which they could cobble up the Bill. If Lord Londonderry were the bogey man of the situation he had a House of his own, and let him deal with it in the atmosphere which prevailed in another place. They in that House were the Commoners of England, and the Irish Members were the Commoners of Ireland, and in this matter there was no difference between the Commoners of the two countries.

They had an unseen difficulty interposed, but if this was the true note of the House of Commons, there must be some compromise in this matter.

MR. JOHN MORLEY (Montrose Burghs) said it was perfectly clear that the Bill was at that moment in grave peril. As one who strongly desired that the Bill should pass, he asked the Chief Secretary to consider more gravely and more concisely than he appeared to have done the position in which he and the Bill stood. In his judgment, the right hon. Gentleman's speech was a little discursive, and he did not, in his respectful judgment, address himself specifically to the Amendment before the Committee. He should have liked his hon. and gallant friend the Member for North Armagh to have told the Committee what there was in this minimum reduction which he and his friends valued For his part, having taken the best opportunity of ascertaining that, he did not believe that it would be any good to the landlords at all. He wished the Chief Secretary had told the Committee why he attached so much value to this provision. He himself did not believe it was of any value at all to the object which the right hon. Gentleman desired to promote. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the landlord, who would pocket the bonus and march off to Boulogne. Was the reason for this provision a fear on the part of the solvent landlord that such action would tend to lower the price? If that was the ground on which this dangerous clause was being insisted upon, he thought it was a very inadequate reason, and he did not think the landlords themselves, if they had not made a kind of a shibboleth of this provision, would consider that they needed security against the tenants. Whether the provision was needed as against the black sheep of their own order he did not undertake to say, but he did not think that the Chief Secretary would press it on that ground.

On the Second Reading of this Bill, he ventured to say, and he thought he was speaking for some of his friends behind him, that their attitude on this Bill would depend materially upon the treatment which the right hon. Gentleman gave to this particular provision. But he wanted to put another point to the right hon Gentleman. Was it really to be contemplated with patience that this Bill should run a chance of being wrecked because of this provision. If the hon. Gentlemen from Ireland would not accept this provision they could not expect other hon. Members, either on that side of the House or on this, to support the Bill. The one consideration which induced Members representing English and Scottish constituencies to support this Bill, much as they disliked its general tenor—the £12,000,000 and the £100,000,000—was that it was accepted by Gentlemen from Ireland as a real settlement. Now it was impossible after what had passed this afternoon for any one to contend that this Bill was accepted and would be worked by those who had influence in Ireland with a view to promote its successful operation. He therefore appealed to the Chief Secretary. The right hon. Gentleman, in his speech this afternoon, had indicated a great willingness, if possible, to meet views of the kind he was now expressing, and admitted that there were certain classes excluded from the zone-treatment which he was willing to admit into the provision. Why should the right hon. Gentleman not extend that proposal to judicial holdings? And if there were cases where there was reason to suppose that the bargain arrived at between a landlord and tenant was not a safe bargain for the State, then let the Estates Commissioners send down and ascertain how far the bargain was reasonable and just. He hoped the Government would consider any suggestion which would extricate them and the Committee from a grave peril. It was a great peril to the State that purchasers should be placed in such a position. It was to the interest of all that a purchaser should not make a bargain he would not be able to keep. He submitted this suggestion in the hope that the right hon. Gentleman would give it some consideration.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) said he quite agreed that the real driving force behind the Bill was the feeling that this Bill was a fair promise of the settlement of the Irish land question. English Members were willing to accept it and pledge the British credit, and give a large sum for the purposes of this Bill, on the one condition that it should settle the Irish land question. The taxpayer would be willing to give even more money if he thought this would be a real permanent settlement of the question of Irish land, but he would not be willing to give half the money for any petty and temporary measure. If the Bill was to effect a permanent settlement it must be acceptable to the Irish people, and they had now to find out whether this Bill was satisfactory to Ireland or not. The only way to do that was to ask hon. Gentlemen representing all classes of Irish opinion. The only person in favour of this clause and not in favour of the Amendment was the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Armagh, and therefore the Committee was in this extraordinary position—that a Bill which depended for its success in this House upon Irish approval, was at this moment being imperilled because the right hon. Gentleman would not yield to almost universal Irish opinion in the matter. His hon. and learned friend the Member for Waterford had said that he had encountered a large amount of political risk in supporting this measure and recommending it to the people of Ireland, but there were other Members of other Parties in the House who ran great political risk also, and never had a Bill a fairer chance on its Second Reading, supported as it was by the universal approval of all parties in the House. He had listened to almost every word of the debate during the last two days, and he had listened to every word of the speech of the Chief Secretary, in eager anticipation to hear what could be said in favour of this clause. The right hon. Gentleman's remarks had amazed him. The right hon. Gentleman had said it did not matter how many years purchase the tenant gave, whether it was eighteen, twenty, or twenty-eight for their holdings. That was language he should expect to hear from a moneylender who was trying to persuade a man to sign a bill. If the Bill passed in its present shape, and the tenants were induced to give exorbitant prices for their holdings, all the magic of property would disappear until the third generation. If a man bought at eighteen years or twenty years purchase, it might be possible, in time, for he or his son to pay the whole of the sum due to the State and become owner of the soil. The Committee stood face to face with the possibility of three generations of Irishmen being bound owing to the excessive price it was proposed to charge for the holdings. This peril was not any fault of the Chief Secretary, but was due entirely to one section of the landlord party.

He did not object to the bonus of £12,000,000 being given to the landlords, but he certainly did object to a bonus of £12,000,000, *plus* a second bonus of £12,000,000 in the shape of a higher number of years purchase being given to them; was it to the credit of a responsible Government to come forward with a proposition that a certain class of the landlords of Ireland, having got these large inducements given to them to sell their farms, should require a further inducement in the inflation of the value of their property by four or five years extension in the price of purchase. They were in the extraordinary position that the only benefit the tenants got by the bonus was that the value of the land was enhanced. It was a most extraordinary thing that because the landlords got money from the State they should say that the tenants should pay a higher price. He had with him a number of Returns showing that between seventeen and eighteen years was the average purchase price, and the Chief Secretary had not succeeded in breaking down the figure. Even though first and second-term rents were mixed together, that only made the argument stronger, because the number of years purchase was greater in the case of second-term rentals than of first-term rentals. Seventeen or eighteen years purchase on depreciated land stock, which had fallen from 103 to 92, represented in solid cash only fourteen or fifteen years purchase; yet under the Bill the landlords were to get in cash twenty-two and a half years purchase in the case of second-term rents, or eighteen and a half in the case of the first term, and that was taking the most favourable terms to the tenants. Many Members were falling into the error of talking of the minimum price as though it would be the normal figure of purchase. The question must be argued on the basis of the average reductions and the average price, and the Bill was being imperilled in order to secure to the landlords, in addition to the bonus, twenty-five years purchase. No defence had been made of the proposal. The interest of the tenant in getting a fair price, and that of the taxpayer in getting an adequate security were one and the same, because so far as the price paid by the tenant was inflated, so far would the security of the State be diminished. Mr. Bailey's report showed that wherever land purchase had taken place under reasonable conditions the transformation of Irish life had been magical; sobriety, thrift, home comforts, contentment—all had increased. But it also showed that where land purchase had been conducted on principles such as those in this clause, it had been, not a benefit, but an injury to the people, their last condition of hopeless despair being worse than their first. He desired land purchase to take place under conditions which would make the people prosperous, not under conditions which would lead them to bankruptcy. That was really the issue before the Committee. The Chief Secretary seemed not to have grasped the position in the matter. They were not now dealing with the "slum holdings," but with the average and normal holding, and any concession which stopped short of saving that class of tenant from bargains which would make them bankrupt instead of prosperous, could not be regarded as facilitating the progress of the Bill or tending to a real settlement of the land question.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL felt that they were at the parting of the ways on this question. He remembered the Act of 1870 being passed through the House, when thirteen Members protested against the Bill, demanding what was called "the three F's." The demand was refused, but ten years afterwards the great Minister who refused it honoured himself by granting it in full. Again, in the case of the Act of 1881, a demand for the inclusion of leaseholders was rejected, but it was complied with six years later. In the case of Bill after Bill Irish demands, backed by practical unanimity, had been refused by the House of Commons, insisted upon in Ireland, and finally, after trouble and sometimes outrage, conceded by England. What was the position on the present occasion? In the old fights there had always been an Ulster landlord party with something to say for the landlords, but to-night the landlords were left derelict except for one voice crying in the wilderness. There were fifteen Ulster Members present, but only the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Armagh had said a word in favour of this proposal. Personally, he had never taken the line that the landlords ought to be turned out of the country; on the contrary, he had always desired that they should remain, and be recompensed for giving up their land. He was in favour of, not only an economic price, but something more being paid, and he had told the Irish tenants it would be worth their while to pay that something more in order to get rid of landlordism and all that it represented. He had gone further than hon. Members opposite in regard to the price that should be given, and he adhered to his position. He had gone in advance even of the people of Ulster in this matter; he had not all the people at his back in the concessions he had made to the Irish landlords; he had gone beyond his mandate, but if a settlement could be arrived at he would stick to his own opinions. Those opinions, however, could not be carried too far, and he appealed to the House of Commons not to shut the door upon the one chance that this generation would see of settling this eternal trouble. There was a class of holdings that had been unfairly rented. They had been rented on the tenants' own improvements, and that was his difficulty in this business, and if he could see that class protected he would be prepared to support a reasonable compromise. It was the old question of the men who knew against the men who did not know; it was the case of the men who had knowledge of the people and their customs against the English and Scottish Members, possessed of the best instincts, but lacking knowledge, and wedded to the Party feeling which would induce Members to come in from the smoking room and vote against the Amendment upon which the peace of the country depended for the next generation. It was an intolerable situation, and he hoped the Chief Secretary would have something to say which would relieve their minds.

MR. WYNDHAM said that in response to the many appeals that had been made to him he felt bound to rise, although, judging from the earlier speeches that had been made, he regretted to say that he had no suggestion to make that was likely to carry them to a platform of common agreement. He was afraid he had found no solution in his own mind. Every hon. Member realised the gravity of the situation. They all credited each other with absolute sincerity in this matter. It was, therefore, an unmixed misfortune that they could not all agree when they all aimed at the same object. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Montrose had said that he had not addressed himself sufficiently closely to the Amendment, that he had made a discursive speech. He did that deliberately. He wished at the outset to bring the Committee back to a sense of the enormous issue at stake, and not to jeopardise that issue upon one feature of it, even although it might be a very important feature. That was his justification. On the Amendment he did deal with the first question raised—namely, the question of the minimum reduction. He must adhere to the minimum reduction proposed. There was one other point in the Amendment upon which he had not spoken. The hon. Member who moved the Amendment, he did not say designedly, proposed to treat as the equivalent of a second-term rent any holding to which the Land Purchase Acts applied. If they accepted the Amendment as it stood they would insist that the big grazier must have a minimum reduction of 25 per cent. He was sure the hon. Member did not intend that. The Land Acts applied to certain holdings, but the Land Purchase Acts applied to many holdings to which the Land Acts did not apply, and these did not exhaust the situation, for there were some holdings which the Land Acts did not touch. The hon. Member for South Tyrone thought that a proposal he had made was that they should include inside the zone holdings to which the Land Acts did not apply and which were outside the zone. That was not so. A grazing farm of more than £100 valuation and townparks were outside the zone; and upon those holdings, even if the clause passed as the Government now presented it, it would be necessary to proceed more or less upon the line which now obtained—that was to say, the Land Commissioners would look at the bargain which had been arrived at and see whether the security was adequate, and a price might be arrived at not inside the zone. It might be higher or lower. The hon. Member seemed to suggest that there were in Ireland certain classes included within the zone as the Bill now stood which might with advantage be relegated outside the zone to the position now occupied by the classes already outside. If he had received any earlier intimation that any such suggestion would be welcome, or be of assistance towards agreement, he would have made it an hour ago. But he did not receive such intimation until the hon. Member spoke. He did not know to what class the hon. Member for South Tyrone was alluding. He spoke of those who had undergone pressure, or who might be exposed to pressure, but he assumed he was alluding to future tenants.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL explained that he had said that even among the class of second-term tenants there were men whose rents he believed to have been unfairly fixed on their own improvements. They ought not to be tied within those cast-iron rules, and the Commissioners ought to be able to give them relief.

MR. WYNDHAM said he understood the hon. Member to be addressing himself to those classes who had not had the benefit of second-term rents. He would be perfectly ready to consider an Amendment cutting non-judicial tenancies out of the zone, but if that would not lead to agreement, he was afraid he must adhere to the clause as it stood. It would not be wise to complicate the Bill if no advantage was to be gained from it, and if it did not advance them nearer a form of solution. The basis of the Bill was the rents which had been fixed by judicial process. There they had certainty, but elsewhere they had uncertainty, and they ought to proceed on certainty. He was prepared to accept an Amendment which did not shatter the basis of the Bill, but he could not undertake to accept an Amendment which would have that effect.

MR. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): Our view is that outside the zone is outside the Bill. We want to know, if they fall back on the Ashbourne Act, will the inducement to the landlord to sell still remain?

MR. WYNDHAM said that the holdings on which a judicial rent had been fixed, or non-judicial holdings, as it was now proposed to treat them, were inside the zone, but on the same estate there might be grazing farms of more than £100 a year. They were outside the zone, but within the estate. Therefore, the sum offered in respect of these holdings went into the *corpus* of the estate, and the bonus, allocated as at present suggested, applied to the whole *corpus* money of the estate. On a holding on which a judicial rent had been fixed, the first clause said that the Commissioners were to sanction a bargain within the limits of the zone and not otherwise. That being so, if a separate bargain outside the limits were made in respect of a particular holding to which the zone applied, then there would not be a bonus; but if the future tenant and the non-judicial tenant were thrust out of the zone, he went into the category of cases already excluded from the zone, and there would be a free bargain without the limits, and carrying a bonus with it. If he made so great a departure from the Bill, the number of exceptions would be increased by the non-judicial tenants, and he would have to introduce a clause declaring that the bargain was to be examined with a due regard to all the circumstances of the case.

MR. JOHN REDMOND said he could scarcely think that the Chief Secretary imagined that he had made anything in the nature of a substantial concession. He had proposed that non-judicial tenants should be exempt from the operation of this zone, but the judicial tenants should remain in. Why did he make that distinction at all? If it were proper that the zone should not apply to non-judicial tenants, how could the Chief Secretary argue that it ought to apply to judicial tenants? In any case the non-judicial tenants were but a minority. The great bulk of tenants in Ireland were judicial tenants, and it was with their case that they were mostly concerned. He could not concede that the right hon. Gentleman had made any reasonable concession whatever.

*MR. BLAKE (Longford, S.) said they had been dealing with cases within the zones, and to which the question of first and second-term rents applied; they had not been dealing with exceptional cases in the general discussion; and therefore they were really still at the point, notwithstanding the concession of the right hon. Gentleman, at which they were when the hon. Member for South Tyrone sat down. He rose with the greatest possible reluctance to trespass upon the attention of the Committee for a few moments only. He rose with the deepest feeling of regret on account of the turn this debate had taken, due to the inexorable condition of maintaining this limitation in the clause. The Irish representatives were voicing the opinion of the great bulk of the whole population as well as of the tenant farmers in Ireland, because it was not the tenant farmers alone who were interested in the question of solving the Irish land problem. The whole people of the country were practically agreed on this question to an extent unexampled in the history of any country which was said to possess free institutions. It was a most extreme anomaly that, where the popular representatives of a whole nation were practically unanimous in the legislature which had to deal with their concerns, they should be told they were impotent to get their views attended to and their wishes turned into law, but that some unseen and unnamed power was to thwart the wishes of the nation, and that they were not even to have the opportunity of trying the plan which those who spoke the views of the whole nation said was necessary to procure the peace, comfort, and prosperity of the country they represented. If they were to ask him to state a possible case which should demonstrate the difficulty of governing Ireland by an external power, it would be the case presented by this House just now. Let them not even yet abandon the effort to consider where they stood. The right hon. Gentleman in that speech, which he was afraid was not inaptly described, having regard to the real crux of the position, as discursive, gave them a description of the benefits which were to be attained by both sides by the financial operations of this Bill. He owned it seemed to him his description did appertain to that class of operation which he characterised with contempt as financial jugglery. What he told them was so far true that no doubt benefits could be obtained by both parties by the extrinsic operation of the use of British credit. That alone was where they got special benefit. They obtained money at a low rate of interest. But that benefit the landlords alone would reap, for the right hon. Gentleman practically adopted the suggestion which had pervaded the discussions of those who represented the landlords' interest throughout, namely that the House of Commons was to assume that it was a matter of absolute or practical indifference how many years the annuity was to last to the intending purchaser, and that the only question he had to consider was what the amount of the annuity was to be. This was financial jugglery.

The right hon. Gentleman spoke of greater benefits than ever before which would be derived under this Bill. What were the greater benefits than ever before? Was not the rate of interest the same. Was it not 2¾ per cent.? It was true that the instalment was less. Why? Because the tenant was told that they would not give up altogether—but defer payment for a certain number of years of the instalment money. Free of interest? No, of course he had to pay interest for every hour of delay. The practical result was that they were saying to the tenant, "You are going to get a reduced annual instalment of principal, and it is of little consequence to you how long you take to pay it, though you are to keep on paying interest all the while." He admitted that the right hon. Gentleman was correct in the view that a great many tenants were likely to assume, or would be disposed to assume, that there was no questioning of that argument, and that present relief would overbear in their minds the circumstance that the term would last so long, and still more would it overbear in their minds that fact because it was going to be a term far longer than the lives of the vast bulk of those who were going to become purchasers. It was a longer period than most of them would be likely to calculate. The other party to the bargain, and the Government is rightly considering their interest as well, would have all the benefit of that situation. They had all the benefit of the situation, which had been inaccurately described as a situation which conferred on the tenants benefits it did not in fact confer. The desire and anxiety to settle the question, and to have a fixed arrangement which might terminate during the life of the child or grandson in ownership, and which meantime would lessen the amount of annual rent, was a very great temptation to the tenant to pay a somewhat larger price. Why? Not only because of the length of the term and the temporary ease it gave, but because of the circumstance that he had got the money at a cheaper rate than otherwise he could do by the operation of British credit. But to suggest that all the advantage was on his side, and that there was no account to be taken of the vast number of years during which this sum had to be paid, was a suggestion that did savour of financial jugglery. Again. if they were to take into account the course of financial events and conditions, and the history of the rate of interest for the last generation, they must remember, when they were arranging for a fixed rate of interest for a term so long as seventy years, that if that state of things progressed the boon they talked of with respect to the use of British credit might be a diminishing and not an increasing boon. So far as they were aware there would be a progressive decline in the rate of interest, and if there should be a decline to the extent of one-half or even one-quarter on the present rate it would be an actual burden upon the tenant to prolong the time of repayment.

The tenant was advised to make a fair and reasonable bargain, one which he was sure he would be able to keep, as against the temptation, which he admitted would be strong, to look only to the reduction in his rent. That circumstance and this scheme were the security to those who were sellers, and to the Government of the day for the view that there was no danger at all in striking out this proposal to which they objected. The danger was that they would go to a higher price and not to a lower price than they ought to pay. He remembered the suggestions made more than once by the Chairman of the Land Conference that there was a great deal too much talk about the number of years purchase, and that the annuity was not to be translated into the number of years purchase. Really the right hon. Gentleman had been adopting the same argument. It was a potent suggestion, and a great inducement and temptation, and one very likely to be used unduly to enhance prices. Would it not be a circumstance of awful solemnity if this clause should pass on the conditions on which the right hon. Gentleman had now placed it. The responsibility of those who represented the people of Ireland was of course a very serious one; it was impossible for them to tell the Irish people—if their intimate convictions were that the scheme of the Bill was such that it would not produce a settlement—it was impossible for them with honesty to tell the Irish people that it would produce a settlement. Their earnest desire was to be able to say so. If this limitation which was to prevent the attempt to bargain for a lower price, which was to limit freedom of contract, was retained, it would be impossible for the Irish representatives to act with reference to the acceptance of the Bill and its working with the same sense of hope that it would produce a settlement of the land question as if the view of the nation on that subject were accepted. The illustration given by the right hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh in regard to the selling of a horse put the argument of the landlord party very clearly. Would it not be a piece of high comedy if the views of the Irish representatives were to be overborne, and the freedom of bargaining should be restricted in the way proposed, when they knew that the British taxpayers would be protected by the freedom of bargaining which they wished to see retained. By the suggestion of that right hon. Gentleman, who reduced this great national transaction to the level of a horse trade, it would take a longer time to bargain, and it would be more difficult to come to a conclusion than if freedom of bargain was given in substance as well as in form, under this Bill, which was not a compulsory Bill. And on this ground, forsooth, freedom was to be denied. That argument ought not to prevail. Therefore he still hoped that those expectations which had been raised so high, and those desires, to fulfil which so many sacrifices and concessions had been made, might not be turned into worry, anxiety, and apprehension; but that the current of Irish sentiment might yet waft the Bill to a successful passage through the House, and that its great destined work for good might not be thwarted by an inexorable adherence to a decision which was contrary to the views of the Irish National representatives.

*MR. GORDON (Londonderry, S.) said that, as an Irish Member representing an Irish agricultural constituency—he did not appear either as a landlord or as a tenant—he was sincerely anxious that this Bill should go over to Ireland in such a form as would be acceptable to both sides. That was a great matter in his mind, and what he wished to see effect given to. In Ireland there was a unanimous opinion on the part of the tenants that they should be left free to fix such prices as they and their landlords could agree upon; and he thought it would be a terrible mistake if anything should be done to prevent this measure from being acceptable to the tenants as well as to the landlords. He was one of those who believed that if the Amendment were accepted, perhaps, in the end, the prices would not be so very much different from those embodied in the Bill. Great advantages were given to the tenants, and they were very keenly anxious to become the owners of their farms. These two things would operate in their minds to induce them to give a reasonable price, the utmost limit which they could safely offer. In many cases, especially in the part of the country which he represented, he thought the commercial instincts which governed the transactions of the farmers, as well as the landlords, would be an admirable protection to the landlords when the price of the holdings came to be fixed. It had been said that an agitation might arise where subsequently one estate was sold at, perhaps, less than its true value. He thought a far more dangerous agitation might arise if this Bill went to Ireland without the goodwill, not merely of the hon. Members who represented Ireland in that House, but of the people of the country, with the whole of the Nationalist Press writing against it, and with everything being done to prevent it getting that fair play which he admitted even if the Amendments were not carried it ought to get. He wanted the Bill to be received as a boon by the people, and he did not wish there should be one single clause in the Bill which would prevent its most beneficial operation.

MR. HARRINGTON said that before the division was taken he hoped they should have something further from the Chief Secretary. He did not think that the right hon. Gentleman himself realised the position in which he had been placed by his adherence to the zone system in this clause. The views which had been put forward that evening on behalf of the Irish landlords against the Amendment were not the views of the selling landlords, but of those who did not wish to sell, and who wished to keep up, for their own purposes, a purely artificial price for Irish land. The caution of the House of Commons had always been directed towards securing that the price paid for a holding was such as to enable the tenant to discharge his liability, and to repay the State the money advanced to him; but under the clause as it stood there was no sufficient inquiry provided as to whether the State would have that sufficient security. The Irish Members, however, wished to address themselves in the discussion of this clause to the point of view of settling this land question once and for all. Hence it was that they urged the acceptance of the Amendment on the Government. If they were animated by the motives sometimes suggested in the House, nothing would be more easy than for them to come to the House of Commons and accept this measure as an instalment only of what they wished for; but they were really anxious that a final and satisfactory settlement should take place. They did not want to be in the position of coming back to the House two or three years hence, of recalling their utterances there to the discredit of the whole country, and asking the House of Commons to re-open a question which had disturbed the House so long. This was a settlement far beyond what the Irish landlords ever dreamt of getting, and beyond that which the representatives of the Irish landlords expected at the Conference. Many reasons had been given for fixing a minimum price. One was that pressure would be brought to bear on the Irish landlords to sell. But how could that pressure be applied having regard to the fact that every inducement was to be offered to the landlords to get the best price they could. The higher the price, the higher the bonus. If the right hon. Gentleman insisted on retaining the minimum price the great danger was that it would immediately present a frightful contrast to those who purchased under the Ashbourne Acts and those who would buy under this Bill. A contrast would also be shown in the case of the landlords who sold under the Ashbourne Acts compared with those who sold under this Bill, when passed into law. The average number of years purchase under the Ashbourne Acts was seventeen or seventeen and a half, but under this Bill, as it stood, the minimum which would be paid would be at least twenty-two years purchase, or a difference of between four and five years purchase. Then, he should like the Committee to consider the difference in the position of the landlords under the Ashbourne Acts and under this Bill. Under the former one-fifth of the purchase money was retained from the landlords, and there was no sale until the Land Commission was satisfied that there was sufficient security to the State for the price offered. The landlords, also, under the Ashbourne Acts had to bear the whole expense of the investigation as to title.

And, it being half-past Seven of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

IRISH LAND BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Clause 1 :—

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 15, to leave out from the word 'advance,' to the end of Sub-section (2), and insert the words 'provided that the purchase annuity payable under this Act will be, in the case of the purchase of a holding, subject to a judicial rent fixed or agreed to since the passing of the Act of 1896, not less than 15 per cent. below the existing rent, and, in the case of the purchase of a holding subject to a judicial rent fixed before that date or of a holding which is not subject to a judicial rent but the tenancy in which is one to which in the opinion of the Land Commission the Land Purchase Acts apply, not less than 25 per cent. below the existing rent.'"—(*Mr. John Redmond.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'or,' in line 18, stand part of the clause."

MR. HARRINGTON, continuing his speech, said he desired to point out the value they attached to this Amendment was really in the question whether this Amendment was to be accepted by the Government in the spirit of the Land Conference Report or not. There could be no doubt that under the Bill the landlords had got the most generous terms they could have hoped for. It had been suggested that the Nationalist Party had retired from the position it had taken up, in respect to this arrangement. The hon. and learned Member for North Louth had stated that the first suggestion he saw as to the question of zones was in the Land Conference Report. It might be true that the Land Conference Report might be so interpreted, but there was no suggestion in the Land Conference Report as to the treatment of this subject by zones. It might be said that the expression "equivalent to second-term rents" meant that they were to be treated in some form or other, but this form of zones was not in the mind of the Conference when they adopted the Report. The Conference recommended an immediate reduction within the limits of 15 per cent. and 25 per cent. That was not the position taken up by the Government in the Bill; the ultimate and final reduction adopted in the Bill was not the reduction advocated in the Conference Report. An attempt was now being made to tie them down to the words of the Conference Report. They were accused of departing from the recommendations of the Conference, but the Government had not adopted the Conference Report. If they had, the Nationalist Party would have stood by it. The hon. Member for North Louth had stated that the Land Conference had been trapped by certain promises made by the Government. That was not their difficulty at all. Their difficulty was that they had no suggestion of any kind from the Government. These recommendations were made by the Land Conference because they desired to go as far as they could and offer as generous terms as they could to the landlords, and they were made without the slightest knowledge of what financial assistance the Government would give them. In the Land Conference Report it was stated that the landlords should get a sum equal to 90 per cent. of their income. Only 10 per cent. was to be deducted from the landlord's income where the cost of collection had been incurred. Mr. Gladstone in 1886 deducted 20 per cent., and that was before the Conference when this 10 per cent. was fixed. But to fix that deduction, as it had been fixed in this clause, as the minimum price was quite a ifferent matter.

When the landlord collected his income, in no single case could he get all his rent, even though second-term rents had been fixed. In nearly every case there were arrears which the landlord could not recover, and there had been many cases where the landlord not only could not recover, but where he had had to come forward to assist his poor tenants, and when they were deducting this 10 per cent. from the nominal income in order to arrive at the real income, they were taking off a percentage which still left the income at a higher figure than that which the landlord obtained. That also was a matter that should be taken into consideration in fixing the minimum price. The result of all the agreement they had had in Ireland as the result of the Conference, and the better feeling produced in Ireland, amounted to this, that the landlord who sold now could get a payment in ready cash, where before he was paid in land stock, which was variable, and therefore involved risk; the landlord now got his money immediately, in addition to which he was relieved of all the expense of proving a title for the purposes of sale; and he got a bonus of two, or three, or four years purchase from the State. Having got all that, it was now suggested that they were to enhance the price the tenant had to pay by clapping on a further four years to the purchase price. What the Conference had to do was to devise a plan to induce the landlords to sell, but if that plan was taken up by the Government, and worked in such a way as to afford no inducement to the tenant to buy, the whole of the labour of the Conference would be thrown away. The matter had hitherto been discussed from the point of view of the State as a whole, but the landlord in selling would have to take the position of his tenants into consideration. There were some tenants of land on which was no house, who would have to build their house to hold possession of the land, and the positions of the tenants generally were very varied. The position the Government took up was that even if a landlord, having the consent of all the encumbrancers, agreed to sell on terms which he and his tenant considered fair, he was not able to do so. What was the object of all this? It had been suggested it was to prevent pressure being brought to bear on the landlord to sell at a low price. Why should such pressure be brought to bear on a landlord? There never had been pressure in a single instance. The danger was that the tenants would be so eager to buy when they could get even the slightest relief from the rent, that they would not consider their position, and would be too likely to take an obligation upon themselves which they could not fulfil to the advantage of the country or the State. The Nationalist Party were anxious that that should not take place. The tenants who had purchased hitherto had carried out their obligations with strict punctuality, and they were anxious to maintain that character for the people of Ireland and to show them that the obligations they took over should not be such as would make it impossible for them to be able to fulfil them.

The effect of fixing this minimum price would be to prevent the landlord dealing at all, though everybody concerned was agreed, with a tenant who did not undertake to pay the so-called minimum price. What was the reason of this? It could not be to assist the landlords to sell. It could only be the result of the persistent obstinacy of a certain class of the landlords who had never accepted the Conference Report in a good spirit, and who were never ready to sell. If they were thrown back on the Report, then the bonus (and this they had never demanded although there was nothing in the Report giving the whole of the bonus to the landlords) should be fairly proportioned between the landlords and the tenants to make it easier for both. They had not demanded that because they were extremely anxious that the tenants should buy, and they were desirous to make it easy for them to buy, but they were not anxious that the tenants should undertake obligations they could not fulfil. Under the Chief Secretary's proposals for the expediting of sales under the Land Purchase Acts, there was no necessity to adopt this minimum price. If it was the desire to keep up artificial prices of land, then the danger before the right hon. Gentleman was that it immediately invited opposition from the tenants. They had looked to this Bill with a desire to settle the land question, and put an end to long continued agitation, and had regarded it as a stepping-stone to a further gift for the people, but if they should again welcome or wish for a renewal of the agitation there could be nothing better for the purpose than for the right hon. Gentleman to hold by the minimum price.

Mr. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.) joined earnestly in the appeal to the Government to make some concession upon this Amendment at this very critical point in the history of the Bill. Every well-wisher to Ireland regarded this Bill as a message of peace, and hoped it would pass through the House as quickly as possible, in order that the miserable land war in Ireland might be speedily terminated. There would be no use in the measure passing, however, unless it had the assent of all classes, because otherwise it would not work. The landlords and tenants of Ireland, and, he believed, the English and Scottish Unionist Members, would hardly be asked to assent to its passage through the House, unless it was believed to be a means towards a final settlement of the land question in Ireland. He believed the opinions of the landlords as to the effect of the Amendment had been greatly exaggerated. As representing a large number of tenant farmers in Ireland, he appealed to the Government to make some concession that would satisfy the great mass of tenants in Ireland, and lead to a peaceful solution and the fulfilment of the hopes that had been kindled during the past three weeks. If the Government could not go the whole way desired by the Irish Members they might go back to the figures accepted at the Dublin Conference, where the representative landlords met the representative tenants and agreed to figures representing the maximum and minimum prices, and might accept those figures as a basis of settlement.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., North) said the first point raised by the Amendment was whether the minimum reduction should be 10 per cent. or 15 per cent. That was a very important question, but not so important or so vital as that raised by the Amendment, as to whether or not the minimum price should be retained in the Bill. He thought the Chief Secretary had failed to grasp the gravity of the question that he had raised by this refusal to accept the Amendment, because the reasons given by the right hon. Gentleman were, in his opinion, not at all adequate to the occasion. The Chief Secretary had not alluded to the fact that the less the tenant paid for his land the greater was the certainty that he would repay the money lent to him. This was a voluntary Bill, and *primâ facie* all the arrangements made in regard to it ought to be of a voluntary character. The only reason for putting in a maximum price was to secure the State, and that object having been achieved, there was no reason for preventing any arrangement which the landlords and tenants might arrive at. Surely the onus of proof that they were not just arrangements laid upon those who opposed them. Then the Chief Secretary had said that if the minimum price was not maintained the remainder man, the chargeant, and the mortgagee might be cheated in a wholesale manner. But the Government themselves did not display a very tender regard under the Bill for the interests of the remainder man, the chargeant, or the mortgagee. These might be cheated by the arrangements to be made within the limits of the Bill. It might happen that if the landlord did not get the maximum price for his land he might cheat the remainder man, and he might cheat his mortgagees and the chargeant also. Then if he went on and agreed with the tenants to sell at the maximum reduction, he might at once deprive the remainder man, the mortgagee, and the chargeant of what they would otherwise have received. It was obvious that as much harm might be done by dealing within the limit as if the minimum price were swept away altogether. As a matter of fact, a man might be so heavily encumbered that if he did not get the maximum price there would be nothing left for the remainder man and the others. What nonsense it was to think that in the case of improvident or roguish bargains by the landlord in order to get his bonus, the mortgagees would avail themselves of the power to put the property in the Land Judges Court, and come out of Court with nothing at all.

Then the Chief Secretary had said that different prices might be paid for estates in the same localities. Had not that been done ever since the first Land Purchase Act was passed in 1835, and long before that? But if it had never before taken place might not different prices be paid under this Bill? One landlord might sell at the maximum and another at the minimum price, although they were in the same townland, and if the dreadful consequences followed that had been imagined by the Chief Secretary, they would arise in that case equally as in the cases imagined by the right hon. Gentleman. He could understand a proposal which was not of vital importance being met by the right hon. Gentleman in this way, but after the repeated warnings given to the Chief Secretary he really could not understand his position. In speaking strongly on this matter the Irish Members were not actuated by any desire for obstruction. Their object was to ensure that the Bill should be a satisfactory settlement of the question, and for that purpose they considered it essential that this point should be satisfactorily settled. In conclusion, he would counsel the right hon. Gentleman to beware of certain advisers. It was unfortunate that some counter attraction had prevented more English Members and more Members of the Government from being present at the debate. He was afraid that the Chief Secretary was not very cordially backed up by those who were sitting next him at that moment, and it was only too true that the Solicitor-General for England had promised nothing more than a minimum support to the Bill. He could not forget that the Solicitor-General for Ireland had irrevocably pledged himself against the abolition of the minimum price, and for the reason which the Chief Secretary had not only never advanced but had thrown overboard—viz., the ridiculous pretence that pressure would induce the landlords to sell at improvident prices. He believed that the landlords would not sell unless they got what they considered to be a sufficient price. He was disposed to think that the Solicitor-General for Ireland committed himself to that declaration before he knew what was likely to be the opinion of the House of Commons, and he greatly doubted if the hon. and learned Gentleman would speak in the same sense now as he spoke in Dublin when he committed himself to an indefinite struggle against the abolition of the minimum price. There was no pretence in the world for thinking that the landlords of Ireland could be induced by pressure to sell at improvident prices. They would sell at the highest prices they could get, and in his opinion they would be well paid if they sold even at the minimum price fixed by the Bill, as they would be getting five years purchase more than they would get under the present system. He could not believe that the reasons advanced for opposing the Amendment were the real reasons, and he submitted that the question at issue ought not to be allowed to be determined by such subordinate Members of the Government as the two law officers.

Mr. SAMUEL YOUNG (Cavan, E.) said that, speaking as a Home Ruler connected with the land and as a landlord—a somewhat unique position for one sitting on those benches—he was bound to confess that he thought this minimum limit was a very disadvantageous provision. For some years past, owing to the death of his brother, he had been possessed of considerable landed property in Armagh, and it was his experience in connection with it that led him to condemn this proposal, because he feared that the effect would be that all farms, large and small, bad and good, would be treated on exactly the same principle. Poor and indifferent land would be sold at the same price as good land, and those who knew anything about the matter were well aware that bad land required a good deal more labour and expense to deal with it, while it produced much smaller crops, than rich land. As a rule, poor land was very much over-rented, while good land, in his opinion, was in many cases under-rented. The limitations proposed by this Bill would, in his opinion, greatly interfere with the free intercourse which there should be between landowners and tenants, and he would therefore like to see them wiped away and a free market provided for; otherwise the material success and smooth working of the Bill would be seriously prejudiced. He trusted that, even at the eleventh hour, the Chief Secretary would see his way to making some concession on the point.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.) hoped that the Chief Secretary would consider the new argument which had just been addressed to him by the last speaker, who had pointed out that it would be impossible for a landlord, under the Bill, to deal with the poorer classes of tenants. The hon. Member for Tyrone, on the preceding night, asked a significant question—he inquired from what quarter of the House the demand came for the retention of that absurd minimum price? No reply had yet been given by the Government to that question, but it had been suggested that it came from only one representative from Ireland, the right hon. and gallant

Gentleman the Member for North Armagh. It certainly did not come from Ulster, Munster, Connaught, or Leinster. It came from Yarmouth, Hackney, Bradford, and York. Hon. Gentlemen, who did not represent Irish land or Irish tenants, had made the demand on behalf of Irish landlords, whose views they professed to represent on that occasion. After two days' consecutive debate, in which all sections of Irish politics had been represented, and in which representatives of Irish opinion, both Unionist and Nationalist, had spoken the unanimous voice of Ireland, they found themselves in the humiliating position of seeing an important point decided, not as they wished, but as proposed by the Members for York and Hackney and other centres of enlightenment. There were unseen influences at work from various quarters. They knew very well what had been the declarations of the Solicitor-General for England and of the Solicitor-General for Ireland with regard to that particular question. The Solicitor-General for England had declared that he would only give the Bill the minimum of support. He supposed that that would also involve the minimum price.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.): No. The maximum price.

MR. FLYNN said hon. Members were apt to fall into error in the use of those convertible terms, "minimum" and "maximum," and he took it himself that what the Solicitor-General for England proposed was to give the Bill the minimum of support, and, at the same time, to give the maximum of support to the absurd minimum price. It was clear the sections of Irish opinion, representing not only the tenants but also a large body of the landlords, had declared against the retention of the minimum price, and, so far, no adequate reason had been given for adhering to the proposal. The right hon. Gentleman simply sat tight in his place, and when, just before the dinner-hour, they thought he would address himself to the question of zones and limits, they were, instead, treated to a dissertation on excluded tenants, town tenants, demesne lands, and other questions dealt with in other parts of the Bill, but having nothing whatever to do with the Amendment before the Committee. This was said to be a voluntary Bill, and the use of the word "compulsion" was tabooed. Suppose for the word "compulsion" they substituted the word "finality." Did they expect finality, or anything approaching finality, under the Bill? If it became law, and if the tenants realised that the views of their representatives in Parliament had been absolutely set at naught in favour of representations coming from York, Hackney, and Yarmouth, were they likely to accept it as a final settlement of the question? Unquestionably there was a certain amount of indirect compulsion in the Bill—indirect compulsion on the poorer tenants to buy. When they talked about the poorer tenants they did not confine themselves exclusively to those who held holdings of under £4 or £5. There were a large number of small, struggling, industrious tenants, whose valuations ran up even to £30, who would be compelled to pay the same rate of purchase for poor and impoverished land as was demanded of the tenants of the larger and better farms on the same estate.

The right hon. Gentleman, who, apparently, at present had no settled convictions, had spoken of the tenant as the spoilt child of the Legislature. He ventured to say that, under this particular Bill, the landlord was the spoilt child, for not only was he to get every penny of the bonus, but he was also to be allowed to get as much as he could extract from the tenants over and above the market value of the land. He would like to know on what ground it could be alleged that estates which were sold as lately as 1901 at fifteen, sixteen, or seventeen years purchase, without compulsion, were in this year of grace to be sold for from twenty-two to twenty-eight years purchase, *plus* a four years bonus. He saw from the Returns which had been presented to Parliament that a considerable number of estates were sold in the county of Cork during the year ending the 31st March, 1901. They had been often told that the operation of the Land Purchase Acts had been brought almost to a dead stop, because, in the first place, the richer class of landlords, who could afford to part with their land, had already done so, and, secondly, because the value of the land stock had fallen considerably. The Returns for 1901 certainly did not bear out the former argument, as many rich landlords sold in that year. With regard to the latter argument, he had worked out the figures, and he found that a landlord who received a net rental of £1,000 a year, would receive under this Bill 70 per cent. more than he would have received had he sold in 1901 under the Ashbourne Acts. Why, then, should the Government stick to this limit? One would think there was some sacrosanct character attached to judicial and semi-judicial rents, and that the tenant was getting some enormous boon in connection with them. After all, what was a judicial rent? It was a reduced rent fixed by a judicial tribunal; and it was practically a reduction of the rack rent which had been hitherto levied on tenants' improvements. When they heard of the hardship of landlords having to submit to a reduction of 20 per cent. they should bear in mind that this was only a partial restitution to the tenant of property which had been created by him or by his predecessors in title, and the reduction did not represent any great degree of generosity. Too often it was only bare justice. A remarkable fact in connection with the second-term rents had not been mentioned, viz., that the earlier batch of second-term rents, were rents which had been fixed at the expiration of the fifteen years term from the earlier first judicial rents, which it had been acknowledged were fixed, not upon a fair basis at all, but in the hope that times would improve. Some of the reductions approximated to 18 or 20 per cent., but on the rents which had come in lately, forming the bulk of the first-term rents, the percentage of reduction had diminished, and in some cases the rents had even been increased. Consequently the zone of prices required to be recast altogether, and to fix any rigid and unalterable limits was to close one's eyes to facts as they at present existed in I eland. He appealed to the right hon. Gentleman not to shut his eyes and ears to the demand which had come from all quarters of the Committee for the abolition of this minimum price.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTSON (Hackney, S.) said nothing had surprised him more than the astonishment which had been expressed on the other side of the House at the establishment of these zones. So far from their having been the invention of the Government, as the hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin appeared to suggest, they were distinctly the result of the Land Conference, and the Government had simply carried out the principle of that Report, that there should be two zones, one for rents fixed before, and another for rents fixed after 1896. The reason 30 per cent. had been selected was as plain as possible. The Conference Report had suggested a minimum reduction of 15 per cent. and a maximum reduction of 25 per cent., but the Chief Secretary, desiring to enlarge the limits, added 5 per cent. at each end, so that the 15 per cent. minimum became 10 per cent. and the 25 per cent. maximum became 30 per cent. It was alleged to be absurd to fix any maximum reduction. He failed to see how any of the Gentlemen who signed the Conference Report could say that, because they themselves declared there ought to be a maximum reduction. The arguments of the Chief Secretary had been in the interest, not of the landlords, but of the smooth working of the Bill. The remainder-man was undoubtedly protected by the maximum reduction being fixed, and it would also minimise the capacity of the tenant for life to cheat, if he had any such desire. As to the suggestion that the abolition of the limitation would increase the security of the British taxpayer, in one sense that was so, but he would point out that if a man lent money for which the security was sufficient, there was no reason whatever for asking for more. Under the limits proposed the taxpayer had ample security, and the security would not be much increased by simply reducing the amount of the advance made upon it. All desired to settle the matter amicably if possible, and the Chief Secretary had expressed his willingness to enter into some compromise, but no special grievance had been pointed out. Surely it was possible to point out the particular classes of tenants that would be adversely affected by the Bill. The Chief Secretary having expressed his willingness to consider any cases of hardship that could be brought before him, he suggested that hon. Members opposite ought to accept the clause as it stood, and rely upon the promise of the Chief Secretary to endeavour to meet such cases.

MR. KILBRIDE said that since the Amendment was moved the Committee had had the benefit of two or three speeches from the Chief Secretary, but he was bound to say that the right hon. Gentleman had done neither himself nor the Committee justice. None was more capable of making a good case for himself than the right hon. Gentleman, but a lamer excuse than that which he had put forward for the retention of this proposal had never been made in the House of Commons. Sitting on that bench the right hon. Gentleman looked very much like a man suffering from gross intimidation. On his right hand sat the Attorney-General for Ireland, acting as a kind of buffer between him and the Solicitor-General for England. That right hon. Gentleman said at Oxford the other day that he was going to give the Bill the minimum of his support. He had been acquainted with the right hon. Gentleman for a good many years, and knew what he was capable of, and he interpreted his speech to mean that he was going to give the maximum price his minimum support, and to give the minimum price no support at all. But he assured the Chief Secretary that he need not be in the slightest degree afraid of the Solicitor-General for England. The right hon. Gentleman was Member for the University of Dublin, and Members for that University in the past, although faithful to the University, had been still more faithful to the salaries they got as law officers of the Crown. Why was the maximum reduction retained at all? He had come to the conclusion that the right hon. Gentleman was doubtful of the success of the Bill, that he believed a compulsory measure would eventually have to be introduced, and that he desired to be able to say that, as in a voluntary Bill, the landlords were given eighteen or twenty-two years purchase, they ought in a compulsory Bill to have three or four years purchase added. Otherwise he could not imagine why the right hon. Gentleman adhered to this provision. Presumably he desired that the responsibility for the success of the Bill should be shared by the Government of the day with the hon. and learned Member for Waterford and the Irish Parliamentary Party; he was surely anxious to be in a position to say that the Irish Members had supported the Bill and pledged their honour that the tenant farmers would meet their engagements; but by refusing to accept this Amendment the right hon. Gentleman transferred all responsibility from the Irish Members to his own shoulders. The right hon. Gentleman assented to that. Were they then to understand that the right hon. Gentleman was not in the slightest degree anxious to have the support of the hon. Member for Waterford in the endeavour to make this Bill a success?

MR. WYNDHAM: Most anxious.

MR. KILBRIDE suggested to the Chief Secretary the advisability of meeting the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Waterford in a more generous spirit. The right hon. Gentleman thought the poorer lands of Ireland were worth twenty-two years purchase, whilst the richest and best land in County Meath or Dublin County was only worth twenty-eight years purchase. Therefore, there was only a margin of six years between the richest and the poorest land in Ireland. If the poorer lands of Ireland were worth twenty-two years purchase—he did not admit it—the richest lands were worth nearer forty-four than twenty-eight years purchase. The right hon. Gentleman had not explained the reason for this provision, which could not be a safeguard to the English taxpayer. The hon. Member for South Tyrone talked about agricultural slums, and he thought that was a very good phrase, because it brought home to the average English mind the vast difference between the poorest and richest parts of Ireland. He would ask hon. Members if the slums of London were worth twentytwo years purchase how much was the West End worth? The Chief Secretary was convinced that twenty eight and a half years purchase was the full price for the best land in Ireland. As a practical farmer he had no hesitation in saying that if the best land in Ireland was worth only twenty-eight years purchase the poorest land was not worth more than fourteen years purchase. Again, this was an arrangement to hold good for sixty-eight years, and, in the opinion of the Government, a reduction of 10 per cent. in some cases was adequate to meet any present agricultural depression or any depression that they were likely to have to face during the next sixty-eight years. He did not think it was adequate. They had been told that the Irish purchasers had been paying their instalments most punctually, but the Committee had not been told why the tenants had so regularly met their engagements. The price of store cattle had been largely increased because for some years they had kept out of this country Argentine cattle. Many of the farms that came under this Bill were occupied by men who lived by breeding and rearing cattle. This Bill would not affect the man who bought store cattle and turned them out as fat cattle. What guarantee had any occupier of land in Ireland that the existing law with regard to the importation of cattle would continue for the next sixty-eight years? Four years ago an Act was passed compelling all foreign cattle to be slaughtered within six days of their being landed in this country. Within the next few years the House of Commons might pass an Act giving free access to store cattle all over England and Scotland. Whenever the Norfolk or Forfarshire farmers were allowed to import and feed these store cattle the rearers and breeders of young stock in Ireland would be unable to meet their instalments. For that reason the minimum price ought to go. If the Government insisted upon maintaining the minimum price they would relieve the leaders of the Nationalist Party of all responsibility under the Bill, and they would have no guarantee that the Bill would work in Ireland.

The Government had had warnings in abundance from hon. Members who were anxious to see an end put to the agrarian struggle in Ireland. He had taken part in that struggle now for a good many years, and he had never yet had the satisfaction of meeting the Solicitor-General for Ireland under adverse circumstances. The Solicitor-General for Ireland sat in the House of Commons by virtue of landlords' votes, while the Attorney-General sat in the House by virtue of the votes of tenant farmers. Therefore he was most anxious to see whether they both agreed upon this question of a minimum price, and he hoped they would both express their views. He did not think that all the blame should be placed upon the shoulders of the Chief Secretary, and he never knew an Irishman who was not always ready to go to the relief of his comrade in distress. He did not think that the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh was more gallant than the hon. Member for Dublin University. He hoped the Attorney-General would give them the views of the farmers of Derry, and that the Solicitor-General would express the opinions of the Irish landlords and the Irish ecclesiastics, and in expressing that opinion he hoped charity would cover a multitude of sins. He was sure the Chief Secretary was desirous of seeing this trouble finished, and that his name should be honourably associated with the final settlement of this question. The right hon. Gentleman was not alone actuated by British interests, for he believed he was actuated by the belief that great good would be done to Imperial interests by a satisfactory settlement of this question. He believed that the Chief Secretary was actuated by an honest and patriotic desire to raise and elevate the poorer class of Irish tenant farmers, and that he was anxious to do all he could to benefit the Irish people as a whole. Unless the Chief Secretary met the suggestions of the Members for Waterford and Cork, his Bill would not work; it would not settle the Irish agrarian difficulty, and in a few years, whatever Party was in power would see the time and patience of the House again put to the test in order to endeavour to arrive at a final settlement of the Irish difficulty.

MR. POWER (Waterford, E.) doubted whether it was any use arguing further with the Government in a reasonable way upon this question. He thought, however, that the House ought to pause long and well before it took the action which it was about to take. He believed that the result of the vote which the Committee was about to give would be ar-reaching beyond the expectations off many hon. Members who would vote for the Government proposal with a light heart. As the hon. and learned Member for Waterford had said, past legislation for Ireland had been spoiled because they had always ignored the voice of Ireland as constitutionally expressed through its representatives. They had had about forty Land Acts, all of which had failed, and they had failed because they had ignored the voice of Ireland. On previous occasions their case had not been as strong as it was to-day, and the Government were about to lose one of the greatest opportunities ever offered to any Government to settle this question. If they did not seize this opportunity the responsibility would be upon themselves. The Nationalist Party had gone a long way in endeavouring to bring peace to Ireland, nd he could say with all sincerity to the landlords that they did not dream a year ago that the terms which they were now scouting would be offered to them. Because the bonus had fallen short of what they expected, the Irish landlords were now endavouring to squeeze out of the unfortunate tenant that bonus which had been withheld from them. Upon this question the voice of Ireland was expressed in no uncertain tone. Ulster, Munster, Leinster, and Connaught joined with one voice in proclaiming that the Amendment demanded by his hon. friend was necessary for the settlement of the agrarian question, but against the voice of Ireland they had the voice of England and of English and of Scotch hon. Members who knew very little about the Irish question, and they were going to vote the Irish representatives down in the Division Lobby. By taking this course the supporters of the Government were rejecting the hand of friendship which was cordially extended to them by the Irish people, and they were giving the King a queer send-off upon his approaching visit to Ireland by ignoring the voice of Ireland upon this question as expressed by her representatives. Now they found Irish landlords scouting terms which a year ago not a single one of them ever expected. He did not know what the result would be, but judging from past experience, by the course the Government were pursuing, he thought they were adding by this Bill another to the many dismal failures which had been passed for Ireland.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) said he felt very much humiliated by the position in which they were placed at present. If the Committee rejected this Amendment, Parliamentary Government, so far as Ireland was concerned, would be a farce and a scandal. They were about to go into the Division Lobby, and in all probability the Irish representatives would be ninety strong. There would certainly be one absentee. An hon. Member was now in a dungeon cell, kept there by the Executive Government.

Mr. WYNDHAM said the prisoner was retained under an order of a Court, and it was not a matter on which the Executive Government was entitled even to express an opinion.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL said he was glad the right hon. Gentleman was ashamed of the action, and that he dissociated himself from it.

Mr. WYNDHAM: I do not wish the hon. Member to impute any motive to the Executive Government in the matter. It is not for the Executive Government to express a view one way or another.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL said the hon. Member was imprisoned at the instance of a gentleman who had been appointed a Member of the Privy Council. He hoped the Irish public would take proper cognisance of certain matters connected with this debate. The First Lord of the Treasury was only here for about five minutes, and the Irish law officers had not spoken in the debate at all. The Chief Secretary had been generalled by Castle lawyers all through the debate. The one Irish representative who had spoken against the Amendment was a gentleman who had always acted in that way. One Irishman who did not represent an Irish constituency had also taken a similar course. Ireland would always recollect the action of the hon. Member for York, and feel sorrow and regret that this great Land Bill had been "butchered" to make a landlords' holiday.

MR. MACVEAGH (Down, S.) said he rose for the purpose of impressing on the Committee that on this question the tenant farmers of Ulster were at one with the tenant farmers of the other three provinces. He could imagine no more signal proof of the absolute incapacity of this House to govern Ireland than the manner in which the united demand of the Irish people had been met with reference to this clause. Two great objections had been urged. The first was to the proposal to set up a limit of price under this clause, and the second was to the placing of non-judicial rents on the same plane as the judicial rents. The second point had been to some extent met by the compromise suggested, but the first objection remained. The arguments on the first point were so overwhelming that personally he could imagine no reason whatever for the action of the Chief Secretary, except perhaps want of courage in the face of the Clonbrocks, Londonderrys, and Ardilauns who had been haunting the precincts of the House for some days past. The immediate effect of the clause as it stood would be to raise the price of the poorer class of holdings, and it was exactly this class of holdings that stood most in need of efficient watching on the part of the Irish representatives and on the part of the State. The clause absolutely violated the voluntary principle which was supposed to have been the basis of the measure. A demand had been made for some years past by the Nationalist Party for powers of compulsory purchase as a means of settling the land question, and that demand had been resolutely resisted by the Government. But in this Bill compulsion had been proposed in another direction, and he would suggest that, seeing what was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander, they should have compulsion all round, and not compulsion on the tenant only. In the present form of Clause I. the Bill absolutely justified the description which had been given of it by many critics as a landlords' relief Bill.

Under the present Land Purchase Acts the first-term rents had been at as low a figure as fourteen years purchase, and the average purchase price last year was eighteen years. Now the Irish landlords wanted an average price of something like twenty-five years and a bonus as well in the direction of meeting the law costs. Altogether they were looking for thirty years instead of eighteen years purchase which they were glad to get last year. An agreement of that kind would obviously be a most improvident one for the tenant farmers to rush into. It would be a serious one in the event of any future slump in agricultural produce in Ireland. It had been pointed out by various speakers that the result to this class was calculated to be injurious to the interest of the British taxpayer. He was not concerned about John Bull's pocket. John Bull was receiving from Ireland £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 in excess taxation, and he could afford to lose a little on land purchase. What the Irish representatives were concerned with was that no risk should be run of the people being put in the position of repudiating any contract into which they entered. He was afraid if the clause was passed in its present form, the result might be that the more thoughtless class of tenant farmers would rush in to buy, and that they would be unable to fulfil the obligations into which the Government were inducing them to enter. The responsibility would rest on the Government if they deliberately forced upon the tenants terms which they knew full well the tenants would be unable to meet. If there was to be a minimum price one would have thought that the Government would have selected the minimum price which had prevailed under the previous Purchase Acts, but that had not been done. He appealed to the representatives of the Government to consider even yet, before the division was taken on this question, whether they could not suggest some reasonable compromise. It would avert the danger of a sharp conflict in this House, and it would avoid the deep disappointment that would be created in Ireland by the attitude of the Government. It would also enable them to enter upon the consideration of the other clauses of the Bill in a spirit of mutual goodwill.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 217; Noes, 176. (Division List No. 118.)

AYES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn, Sir H.
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Man'r*
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*)
Balfour, Kenneth R. (*Christch*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bignold, Arthur
Bigwood, James
Bill, Charles
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Brymer, William Ernest
Butcher, John George
Campbell, J. H M. (*Dublin Univ*
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cavendish, V. C. W (*Derbyshire*
Cayzer, Sir Charles William
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chamberlain, Rt Hon J (*Birm*
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn J. A (*Worc*
Chapman, Edward
Churchill, Winston Spencer
Clare, Octavius Leigh
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
Cook, Sir Frederick Lucas
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Cranborne, Viscount
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Crossley, Sir Savile
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Cust, Henry John C.
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Denny, Colonel
Dewar, Sir T. R. (*Tr. Haml'ts*
Dickson, Charles Scott
Digby, John K. D. Wingfield-
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph
Dorington, Rt. Hon. Sir J. E.
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir William Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
Fergusson, Rt. Hn Sir J. (*Manc'r*
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
FitzGerald, Sir Robert Penrose
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S. W.*
Fyler, John Arthur
Galloway, William Johnson
Godson, Sir Augustus Frederick
Gordon, Hn J. E (*Elgin and N'rn*
Gore, Hn. G. R C. Ormsby- (*Salop*
Gore, Hn. S. F. Ormsby- (*Linc*
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Greene, Sir E. W. (*Bury St. Ed.*
Greene, Hy. D. (*Shrewsbury*)
Gretton, John
Greville, Hon. Ronald
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Guthrie, Walter Murray
Hain, Edward
Hamilton, Rt. Hn. Ld. G. (*Mid'x*
Hamilton, Marq. of (*Londondy*
Hardy, Laurence (*Kent, Ashford*
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Haslam, Sir Alfred S.
Hatch, Ernest Frederick G.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heath, James (*Staffs., N. W.*)
Heaton, John Henniker
Helder, Augustus
Henderson, Sir Alexander
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry
Hoult, Joseph
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Jessel, Captain Herbert Merton
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir J. H.
Kenyon, Hon. G. T. (*Denbigh*
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Kerr, John
Knowles, Lees
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*)
Lawrence, Sir Joseph (*Monm'th*
Lawson, John Grant (*Yorks, N R*
Lee, A. H. (*Hants, Fareham*)
Lees. Sir Elliott (*Birkenhead*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Llewellyn, Evan Henry
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (*Bristol, S.*
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Francis William
Lowther, C. (*Cumb. Eskdale*)
Loyd, Archie Kirkman
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*
Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred

Macdona, John Cumming
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
M'Calmont, Colonel James
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Massey-Mainwaring, Hn. W. F.
Maxwell, RtHnSirH. E. (*Wigt'n*
Melville, Beresford Valentine
Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
Milvain, Thomas
Molesworth, Sir Lewis
Montagu, G. (*Huntingdon*)
Montagu, Hon. J. Scott (*Hants.*)
More, Robt. Jasper (*Shropshire*
Morgan, D. J. (*Walthamstow*)
Morgan, Hn. F. (*Monm'thsh.*)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Murray, Rt. Hn A. Graham (Bute
Murray, Charles J. (*Coventry*)
Murray, Col. Wyndham (*Bath*
Myers, William Henry
Newdegate, Francis A. N.
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Peel, Hn. Wm. R. Wellesley
Percy, Earl
Pierpoint, Robert
Pilkington, Lt.-Col. Richard
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp

Pretyman, Ernest George
Purvis, Robert
Randles, John S.
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Reid, James (*Greenock*)
Renwick, George
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rothschild, Hon. Lionel Walter
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Rutherford, John (*Lancashire*
Rutherford, W. W. (*Liverpool*)
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Sadler, Col. Saml. Alexander
Sandys, Lt.-Col. Thos. Myles
Saunderson, Rt. Hn. Col. E. J.
Seely, Chas. Hilton (*Lincoln*)
Seely, Mj. J. E. B. (*Isle of Wight*
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Smith, Abel H. (*Hertford, East*
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (*Strand*)
Stanley, Edward Jas. (*Somerset*
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stewart, Sir Mark J. M'Taggart
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.
Stock, James Henry

Stone, Sir Benjamin
Stroyan, John
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J G (*Oxf'd Univ.*
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Thorburn, Sir Walter
Thornton, Percy M.
Tollemache, Henry James
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Tritton, Charles Ernest
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. William Hall
Webb, Col. William George
Welby, Lt-Col A. C. E. (*Taunton*
Welby, Sir Chas. G. E. (*Notts*)
Wharton, Rt. Hon. J. Lloyd
Williams, Colonel R. (*Dorset*)
Willox, Sir John Archibald
Wilson, John (*Glasgow*)
Wilson, J. W. (*Worcester., N.*)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (*Bath*
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
Yerburgh, Robt. Armstrong
Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Abraham, W. (*Cork, N.E.*)
Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Allen, Charles P. (*Glouc., Stroud*
Ambrose, Robert
Asher, Alexander
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hon. Herbt. Hy.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (*Cork, S.*)
Bayley, Thomas (*Derbyshire*)
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.
Bell, Richard
Black, Alexander William
Blake, Edward
Boland, John
Brand, Hon. Arthur G.
Brigg, John
Broadhurst, Henry
Bryce, Right Hon. James
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland
Burt, Thomas
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Campbell, John (*Armagh, S.*)
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Causton, Richard Knight
Channing, Francis Allston
Clancy, John Joseph
Cogan, Denis J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasgow*
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark.*
Crean, Eugene
Brooks, William

Cullinan, J
Delany, William
Devlin, Chas. Ramsay (*Galway*
Dewar, John A. (*Inverness-sh.*)
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Doogan, P. C.
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Duffy, William J.
Emmott, Alfred
Evans, Saml. T. (*Glamorgan*)
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (*Leith*
Ffrench, Peter
Field, William
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Sir Walter (*Derby Co.*)
Fuller, J. M. F.
Gilhooly, James
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert J.
Gordon, J. (*Londonderry, S.*)
Grey, Rt. Hn. Sir E. (*Berwick*
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hammond, John
Hardie, J. Keir (*Merthyr Tyd*
Harmsworth, R. Leicester
Harrington, Timothy
Hayden, John Patrick
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Healy, Timothy Michael
Hemphill, Rt. Hon. Chas. H.
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (*Bristol, E.*
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Jameson, Major J. Eustace
Jones, David B. (*Swansea*)

Jones, William (*Carnarvonshire*
Joyce, Michael
Kennedy, Patrick James
Kilbride, Denis
Labouchere, Henry
Lambert, George
Langley, Batty
Law, H. Alex. (*Donegal, W.*)
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (*Cornwall*)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leamy, Edmund
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (*Accrington*
Leigh, Sir Joseph
Leng, Sir John
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, David
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
MacDonnell, Dr. Mark A.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
M'Govern, T.
M'Kean, John
M'Killop, W. (*Sligo, North*)
M'Laren, Sir Charles Benj.
Markham, Arthur Basil
Mitchell, Edw. (*Fermanagh, N.*
Mooney, John J.
Morley, Rt. Hn. John (*Montrose*
Moulton, John Fletcher
Murnaghan, George
Murphy, John
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nolan, Col. John P. (*Galway, N*
Nolan, Joseph (*Louth, S.*)
Norman, Henry
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, James F. X. (*Cork*)

O'Brien, K. (*Tipperary, Mid*)
O'Brien, Patrick (*Kilkenny*)
O'Brien, P. J. *Tipperary, N.*)
O'Brien, William (*Cork*)
O'Connor, Jas. (*Wicklow, W.*)
O'Connor, T. P. (*Liverpool*)
O'Doherty, William
O'Donnell, John (*Mayo, S.*)
O'Donnell, T. (*Kerry, W.*)
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, Conor (*Mayo, N.*)
O'Kelly, J. (*Roscommon, N.*)
O'Malley, William
O'Mara, James
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
O'Shee, James John
Paulton, James Mellor
Pirie, Duncan V.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Priestley, Arthur
Reddy, M.
Redmond, Jn. E. (*Waterford*)
Redmond, William (*Clare*)
Reid, Sir R. Threshie (*Dumfries*
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Robson, William Snowdon
Roche, John
Rose, Charles Day
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (*Cleveland*)
Samuel, S. M. (*Whitechapel*)
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles E. (*Stafford*)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Soares, Ernest J.
Stevenson, Francis S.
Strachey, Sir Edward
Sullivan, Donal
Taylor, Theo. C. (*Radcliffe*)
Thomas, Sir A. (*Glamorgan, E.*
Thomas, David Alfred (*Merthyr*
Thomas, F. Freeman (*Hastings*)
Thomas, J. A. (*Glam., Gower*)
Thompson, Dr E C. (*Monagh'n N*
Tomkinson, James
Tully, Jasper
Walton, J. Lawson (*Leeds, S.*)
Walton, Joseph (*Barnsley*)
Wason, John Cathcart (*Orkney*
White, George (*Norfolk*)
White, Patrick (*Meath, N.*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Wilson, H. J. (*York, W. R.*)
Wilson, John (*Durham, Mid*)
Young, Samuel

TELLERS FOR THE NOES — Sir Thomas Esmonde and Mr. Wood.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said he wished to move the omission of the following words from line 18 to line 21, "or of a holding which is not subject to a judicial rent, but the tenancy in which is, in the opinion of the Land Commission, a tenancy to which the Land Law Acts apply." The largest class of these holdings were future tenancies, but there were thousands of present tenants who had never been in the Land Court at all. They had received abatements from the landlord, if not regularly, at all events periodically. There was another class of present tenants who would be included in these zones just as if they had had judicial rents fixed. There were tens of thousands of judicial tenants who had had their rents fixed for the first time under a condition of the law as to improvements which had been changed by the Act of 1896. These tenants never had an opportunity of coming before the Land Court to get the advantage of the statute which the House intended they should get. These tenants had a right to have that fact taken into account. There was also a large number of tenants who had never gone into the Land Court at all, but who were entitled to go in. They were present tenants undoubtedly. Many reasons might be given why they had not availed themselves of the privilege of going into the Land Court. They might have been in arrears of rent, and if they were, the landlord could evict them, and create them future tenants on the spot. There was another class which had received periodical abatements of their rents from the landlords as the seasons pressed. There were landlords and landlords in Ireland. There were landlords who were good to their tenants, who took account of bad seasons, and regularly made abatements to them if they did not go into the Land Court. These tenants under the Bill were treated precisely as ordinary judicial tenants who would come under the zones. If the House wanted to pass a just measure—he did not say whether it did or not—[An HON. MEMBER on the Irish Benches: It doesn't.]—that class of tenants who had not gone into Court but who had received abatements, should be dealt with separately. Their rent, minus these abatements, ought to be the existing rent as defined by the Bill. There were also a large number of future tenants which consisted of several classes. A future tenant might have bought immediately after the Act of 1882 in the open market. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary might probably say that they took their chance, knowing the law. That was quite true; but there were a very considerable number of future tenants to whom that would not apply. These future tenants had been created by machinery which was perfectly well known to every Irish Member. They got into arrears, and eviction notices under the Act of 1887 were served upon them which determined the tenancies. They became then simple caretakers, but they did not remain in occupation of the land as caretakers; they became instead future tenants. Thousands of tenants had been turned into future tenants by the eviction-made-easy clause of the Act of 1887, and many of them had never got an abatement at all. It was not possible that the Committee could place these tenants in the same position as tenants who had got abatements of from 20 to 38 per cent. His contention was that all these classes of tenants should be removed from this part of the zone, and treated as a separate class. With the view of inserting a new Sub-section later on, he begged to move,

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 18, to leave out from the figures '1896,' to the word 'if,' in line 21."—(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

MR. WYNDHAM said that at an earlier hour of the day he had given his view that the future tenants in Ireland stood on a very different basis from the judicial tenants, and he had stated that, in order to arrive at an agreement, he was prepared to treat non-judicial tenants in a different spirit from judicial tenants. He had urged again and again that in his opinion it was very important to preserve judicial rents as the basis of this Bill, but he was not entitled to say that equal importance attached to it in cases where there was no judicial rent. The hon. Member instanced the case of future tenants. Of course, he could not be expected to agree with the hon. Member in his account of all the circumstances in which these tenancies had been terminated. He knew that tenancies might have been surrendered, and new tenants might have come in. Tenants might have been evicted because of the unhappy struggle, and had been put back nominally at the old rent. If he included non-judicial tenants within the zone, he would have to consider an Amendment on the Paper in the name of the hon. Member for Louth, stating that if such tenancies were retained, customary abatements must be taken in lieu of nominal rent. On a point of that kind, desirous as he was to make progress with the Bill, he would far rather make a clean cut and leave tenancies without judicial rent outside the zone, but inside the estate, for the purposes of the bonus. But if he did that, he was making such a considerable addition to the categories which, even as the Bill stood, were outside the zone, but inside the estate, that it would be expedient to put down a new clause of an explanatory character stating in so many words how the tenancies were to be dealt with.

MR. T. M. HEALY thanked the Government for making this concession, and for the spirit in which the right hon. Gentleman had spoken. However, he could not quite grasp what the right hon. Gentleman's proposal was, and he would like the Government to put their Amendments on the Paper at as early a date as possible. There was a class of future tenants in whom he had an interest. For instance, one whose rent was £60 a year was evicted because he went into the Land Court, and a complete stranger was put in who grabbed all the improvements and got the farm at £40 a year. He had no sympathy with such future tenants. Might he make the suggestion that the landlords did not know their own minds; they were not an organised party. He denied the right of two or three Gentlemen on the Government side of the House to speak with authority on behalf of the tenants. He suggested that the Government should not close their minds with regard to this Amendment.

MR. WYNDHAM said that the Government accepted the Amendment.

MR. DILLON said that this clause was very complicated and difficult as it stood, and they should be quite sure of their ground. He therefore thought that the Government should put their proposed new clause or Amendment on the Paper.

Question, put and negatived.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion made—

That the Committee do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

IRISH LAND [ADVANCES, ETC.].

Resolution reported.

"That, for carrying out the provisions of any Act of the present session to amend the law relating to the occupation and ownership of land in Ireland, it is expedient—

(a) To authorise the creation of capital stock for raising money required for the Irish Land Purchase Fund and the Land Purchase Aid Fund, and to authorise the National Debt Commissioners to borrow and lend money for the purposes aforesaid, and to charge on the Consolidated Fund the payment of the dividends on such stock so far as not paid out of the income of the Irish Land Purchase Fund, and to authorise the payment out of money to be provided by Parliament of sums sufficient to pay the dividends and Sinking Fund required for the Land Purchase Aid Fund.

(b) To authorise the payment out of money to be provided by Parliament of the salaries of the Estates Commissioners, the Public Trustee, and of officers and persons employed by them, and of certain expenses of the Land Commission; and

(c) To authorise the payment out of the Consolidated Fund of superannuation allowances to certain Land Commissioners."

Resolution agreed to.

GUINEA POSTAL ORDERS BILL

Read a second time, and committed for Tuesday next.

Adjourned at four minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 17*th June*, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Winchester Water and Gas Bill. Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Wirral Railway Bill [Lords]. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill. Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow.

PETITIONS.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.

Petitions against: from Clevedon; Sidcup; and Birmingham (two); to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petitions for alteration: from Hurlford; and Roberton; to lie upon the Table.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.

Petitions against: from Oxford; and Durham; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

PROSECUTION OF OFFENCES ACTS, 1879 AND 1884.

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 16th June—*Mr. Cochrane*] to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 209.]

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2996 to 3000 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST AFRICA (CONCESSIONS).

Address for "Return, showing the names of the firms or individuals to whom concessions have been granted in East Africa or Uganda; the exact nature and terms of those concessions; and the exact localities and areas of their operation."—(*Mr. Malcolm.*)

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS.

Return ordered, "showing the imports and exports of the United Kingdom with foreign countries, self-governing colonies, India, and other British possessions separately, for the periods 1881–5, 1886–90, and for each year since."—(*Mr. Lambert.*)

PUBLIC INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.

Return ordered, "of net public income and net public expenditure under certain specified heads, as represented by receipts into and issued out of the Exchequer from 1880–81 to 1902–3, inclusive (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 323, of Session 1902)."—(*Sir Henry Fowler.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Unauthorised Baronets.

SIR JOHN DORINGTON (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to a petition presented to His Majesty signed by a large body of Baronets, has he any further information to give respecting the progress made in the consideration of the prayers contained in the petition, beyond that which he gave in December last; and whether he can state the number of unqualified persons at present using the title and assuming the rank of Baronet.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas.*) In answer to the first part of the Question I can only say that the matter is still under consideration. As regards the latter part, I have no information.

Areas of Parliamentary Divisions.

MR. H. J. WILSON (Yorkshire, W.R., Holmfirth): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

there is any Return giving the area in acres or in square miles of the various Parliamentary Divisions of the counties and boroughs; and if not, whether he would be willing to give such a Return.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas.*) My right hon. friend has asked me to answer this Question. The area of the various Parliamentary constituencies will be found, given in acres, in Table V. of the Summary Tables of the Census of England and Wales, 1901 (Cd. 1523).

Board of Education—Grants and Contributions.

MR. H. J. WILSON: To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education if he will explain the difference between annual grants to schools from the Government Departments, and contributions from the same Departments.

(*Answered by Mr. Arthur Elliot.*) Annual grants are made annually; contributions are not necessarily annual. They are generally made for some special purpose, though they may be continued in some instances over a period of years.

British Cemetery at Corfu.

MR. BROTHERTON (Wakefield): To ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether His Majesty's Ministers can say if they have been able to come to an understanding with the authorities of Corfu, whereby the old British cemetery at Corfu can remain undisturbed.

(*Answered by Lord Cranborne.*) His Majesty's Government have made this matter the subject of the most careful inquiry, and have received separate reports from two officials who have visited the island. The result has been to convince them that the most desirable course, and that most in accordance with the wishes of the British community, is to transfer the old cemetery to the local authorities on certain conditions, among which are the following:—(1) The work shall be supervised by a responsible person appointed by His Majesty's Government, who shall be afforded every facility by the Greek authorities in order to ensure the transfer of the remains and the monuments being efficiently and decently carried out; (2) That the proposed assembly rooms shall not be built on the site of the old cemetery, but on the high ground above. I may add that in the new cemetery to which the remains will be transferred it will be possible to watch over the graves much more carefully than has been the case heretofore.

Time Limit of Telephone Trunk Calls.

MR. BROTHERTON: To ask the Postmaster-General if he can see his way to increase the time limit for trunk calls upon the telephone system of the Post Office from three to five minutes.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) Owing to the time required to obtain the connection of subscribers' exchange lines with the trunk lines, not more than about twelve conversations an hour are possible under the best conditions on any trunk line with the three minutes limit. An increase in this limit would make the lines available for fewer subscribers, and would involve a proportionate increase in the charges for their use. As about 95 per cent. of the present trunk line conversations are completed within three minutes, and as the traffic is practically confined to business hours, a general extension, such as is suggested, would clearly not be to the advantage of the public. An extension of the limit between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. from three to six minutes was made in March to encourage the use of the trunk lines at hours when hitherto they have been little used.

Underground Telegraph Cable to Wakefield.

MR. BROTHERTON: To ask the Postmaster-General if he can state when an underground cable will be completed to Wakefield, so that telegraphic communications can be carried on independent of climatic conditions.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) I am not proposing to lay an underground cable to Wakefield. The underground line from Manchester to Leeds, which I hope to lay during the present year will run *viâ* Bradford, and will render communication with Wakefield practically secure.

Schools under Section 1—Education Minute of 28th May.

MR. CHARLES DOUGLAS (Lanarkshire, N.W.): To ask the Lord Advocate what are the numbers of schools under each of the three Sub-sections of Section 1 of the Education Minute of 28th May; and what is the amount estimated to be paid under each Sub-section.

(*Answered by Mr. A. Graham Murray.*) According to the latest Returns the number of schools with an average attendance of 60 or under is 1,143; that of schools with an attendance between 60 and 100 is 552; and that of schools between 100 and 150 is 322. Of these schools only a small proportion were qualified by their staff for the special grants. But it is impossible to say what number may qualify by fulfilling the conditions during the three months ending 31st December, 1903.

Registry of Deeds Office, Dublin—Chief Clerkship.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether there is, or soon will be, a vacancy in the office of chief clerk in the Registry of Deeds Office, Dublin; and whether, seeing that of the four chief officers of the department at present only one is a Roman Catholic, he will, when the occasion arises, appoint a Roman Catholic to the chief clerkship.

(*Answered by Mr. Elliot.*) A vacancy in the office of chief clerk in the Registry of Deeds Office, Dublin, will occur on the 7th July next. The Treasury will appoint the person considered to be best qualified for the position, without reference to the religious denomination to which he may belong.

Board of Agriculture—Promotion of Temporary Clerk to a Staff Appointment.

MR. T. M. HEALY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that the Treasury have consented to a temporary clerk with approximately two years service in the Department of Agriculture being placed on the permanent establishment and also promoted to a staff post, he will say if in making this staff appointment the claims of gentlemen engaged in the same department who have served for periods from nine to eleven years were considered, and whether any representations were concurrently made to the Treasury as regards these gentlemen; and, if so, whether he can state the nature and result of such representations, the present salaries of the clerk recently promoted, and the other clerks who have longer service.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. Proposals were concurrently made to the Treasury with regard to the remuneration of a considerable number of clerks of six years service and upwards, with the result that in several cases increases of salary were sanctioned. The scale of salary fixed for the staff post referred to is £190—£10—£250. The salaries of the unpromoted clerks with longer service vary from £90 to £200.

Irish Poor Law Inquiry—Printing of Evidence.

MR. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will see that the printing of the evidence and the Report on the working of the Irish Poor Law system about to be taken is executed in Ireland.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The printing required to be done by the Poor Law Commission will be executed, in the ordinary course, in Ireland.

Evening Schools in Ireland—Delay in Payment of Teachers' Salaries.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland why it is that moneys earned by teachers of evening schools have been delayed in many cases over three months; whether some steps will be taken to secure more prompt payment in future.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) I am informed by the Commissioners that, in consequence of the very large increase in the number of evening schools in Ireland, it has been found impracticable to deal with the reports as rapidly as had been anticipated. The fees are sent to the managers as soon as possible after the close of the session in every case where the conditions have been complied with and the final reports received from the inspectors. The payments will be completed in all regular cases in a week or ten days.

South African War Medals.

SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee): To ask the Secretary of State for War, if he will inform the House what number of medals with clasps were issued to officers and men who served in South Africa, distinguishing the several classes of medals and recipients, and also the number of medals without clasps issued to nurses who served in the hospitals during the war.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The actual number of medals and clasps issued to officers and men cannot be obtained without a laborious examination of all the medal rolls concerned, a work which would delay the distribution of those still unissued. The number of Queen's South African medals issued to nurses is 962.

Army—Promotion of Colonels.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, Chelmsford): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he could state on what principle promotions in the Generals List are carried out; and whether he will explain why four officers who received the rank of colonel in 1889 (nine years before the latest appointment), all obtaining promotion as a result of war service, have been superseded.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) Promotion to the ranks of Major-General and Lieutenant-General is now given either to officers who have been selected to fill certain specified appointments, which it has been decided shall carry the rank of Major-General or Lieutenant-General respectively, or for distinguished service. The selection of officers for appointment carrying the rank of Major-General is made from the Colonels List, and seniority does not influence the appointments.

Home Service for 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that the 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers, after losing nearly 400 men and twenty officers in killed and wounded in the late war, were sent from South Africa to Aden, where they have now been for two summers; and whether, in view of the trying character of this station, he will state why the War Office sent a regiment which has rendered the country such services to such a station, and when will the regiment be relieved.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) This battalion has been temporarily detained at Aden owing to certain military exigencies which have not yet ceased. It is not yet possible to state when the battalion can be relieved.

Women on Education Committees.

MR. J. H. LEWIS (Flint Boroughs): To ask the Secretary to the the Board of Education have sanctioned Board of Education in how many cases schemes which make provision for the election of one woman only; and whether he will state on what ground these schemes have been sanctioned, in view of the provision of The Education Act, 1902, requiring the inclusion of women as well as men among the members of the Education Committee.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) While there are a number of schemes, the provisions of which would be satisfied by the presence of one woman on the Committee, there are practically none under the provisions of which, in the opinion of the Board, the presence of more than one woman is impossible. The Board of Education are advised that the requirements of Section 17 (3) (c) are satisfied by the provision in a scheme for the presence of one woman only, especially having regard to the provisions of Section 1 (1) (b) of the Interpretation Act, 1889.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Condemned Army Rations.

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, can he give the details as to amounts and nature of Army rations burned near Pretoria during April last as being unfit for food; did those stores chiefly consist of tinned rations; and, if so, can he state whether they were soldered tins, or what is known in the trade as non-soldered.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): The number of rations burned was 1,699,382. They were all "meat and vegetable rations" in tins, of which about two-thirds were soldered and the rest non-soldered.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Can the right hon. Gentleman say if the rations were all unsound, and will he state the name of the firm that supplied these unsound rations.

MR. BRODRICK: They had been landed for a long period, and some complaint having been made of a certain issue, an immediate investigation was made. In consequence, the rations were immediately destroyed.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Will the right hon. Gentleman give the name of the contractor, and the length of time the rations had been in Africa before they became bad.

MR. PIRIE: Has the right hon. Gentleman received the Report he called for from the General Officer Commanding in South Africa, and will he publish it.

MR. BRODRICK: I do not know that there is any fault to be found with the contractor; and I am not sure that the supplies had not been kept for a longer period than was intended. But I do not know that there would be any objection to publishing the names of the contractors when I receive them. As to the Report of the General Officer, there were certain cases in which the rations distributed had been complained of. Thereupon an investigation was made, and it was found that deterioration had taken place in a considerable portion of the rations.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: What was the total value of the rations destroyed.

*MR. SPEAKER: Questions as to the names of the contractors and the value of the rations destroyed ought to be asked for after notice given.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: May I explain. I did put such a Question down, and the right hon. Gentleman asked me to postpone it.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): Are rations in unsoldered tins still being used?

MR. BRODRICK: Tinned meats of various kinds are being used, but I cannot say whether they are unsoldered or not. There is no question as to laying Papers. It is the most simple question in the world. A large amount of supplies was left on our hands at the conclusion of the war. They would have been used in the next three or four months; but owing to the great reduction in the troops they have remained over for more than a year, and some have deteriorated and have been destroyed. There is no objection to giving the names of the contractors and the values of the rations.

MR. EUGENE WASON (Clackmannan and Kinross) rose to put a further Question.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, Order! This matter must not be debated by way of Question and Answer.

Enlistment of Recruits—Age Regulations.

MR. PIRIE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what measures have been taken to give effect to the Resolution of 25th March as to the age for enlistment, agreed to by this House on the Motion of the Secretary of State; and can he state what effect such measures have had upon recruiting for the regular infantry.

MR. BRODRICK: If a recruit's "apparent age," as decided by the medical officer, is less than the standard, the recruit is required to produce satisfactory evidence that he is of the necessary age. The recruiting for the regular infantry since 25th March has been somewhat in excess of the average of the last three years.

MR. PIRIE: Am I to understand that no steps have been taken since the Resolution was passed?

MR. BRODRICK: I have said the question of age is carefully investigated, and where doubt exists proof is required.

Army Veterinary Department.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state what steps he proposes taking to fill the thirty-five vacancies in the Army Veterinary Department, seeing that only five candidates are forthcoming at present.

MR. BRODRICK: I am not yet in a position to state what steps will be taken.

Gunnery in the Mediterranean Fleet.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty has he now received the further particulars required to complete the Report called for on 11th May as to the firing away, on 29th April last, in two hours, by eight battleships of the Mediterranean Fleet, of 10,513 rounds of ammunition, valued at £875, at ranges from 600 to 1,800 yards; is he aware that the whole practice took place at over 1,800 yards, and that at that distance it is impossible to see the splash of a one-inch rifle bullet in the water; that there was no marking in respect of 9,615 rounds out of the 10,513, and that it was consequently of no utility in improving marksmanship. In what respects did this practice depart from the Admiralty regulation that the attainment of good shooting and proficiency in gunnery are always to be considered as taking precedence over all other duties. Is the Report already received one made by the Commander-in-Chief himself on his own action in ordering this practice, and have the Admiralty called for or received any other Report or statement thereon from any gunnery or other officer. Why is it that up to 18th May some of the battleships and first-class cruisers in this fleet had only had three half-days gunnery practice since 1st January, and that one ship had not had that; and has any explanation of this been called for from the Commander-in-Chief; and, in view of the practice that the reasons of failure in gunnery practice are considered by the Admiralty, and such steps taken with regard to the individual officers concerned as in the opinion of the Admiralty are required, what steps have been taken in the case of this individual officer.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W.): As I informed my hon. friend on the 9th June, † the Commander-in-Chief has been asked to furnish a further Report with regard to some details of the firing on the occasion referred to. This Report has not yet been received, and until it is received I am unable to state to what extent, if at all, the practice failed to conform to the Admiralty regulations, or what were the reasons which led the Commander-in-Chief to vary the regulation practice, if any such variation occurred. The Report which has been received is from the Commander-in-Chief, and contains the details as to the number of rounds fired and other particulars, which I have already communicated to the House. No Report from any subordinate officer has been called for. The information which the hon. Member seeks in the last paragraph of his Question will not reach the Admiralty until the half-yearly Returns of Progress in Gunnery are sent in. If, when they are received, it be found necessary to take any special action, the Board of Admiralty will take such action in the way, and at the time, which they consider most advantageous to the interests of the Service. I venture to think that it is not desirable that every exercise of the discretion of the Board in respect of any particular ship or officer should be made the subject of Question and Answer in the House of Commons. The action of the Board in this, and in other matters concerning the discipline and order of the Fleet must, I submit, be judged as a whole, and, as long as the Board retains the confidence of Parliament, it must be trusted to exercise the discretion which is conferred upon it.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxiii., 324.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Does the hon. Gentleman hold that no Questions should be asked in this House as to the exercise of the discretion of the Board?

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: That is not the point, I suggest that no Question should be asked as to a particular officer with regard to a hypothetical punishment, and in respect of a contingency which has not yet occurred.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: That is not my Question.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: The hon. Member asks "in view of the practice that the reasons of failure in gunnery practice are considered by the Admiralty, and such steps taken with regard to the individual officers concerned as, in the opinion of the Admiralty, are required, what steps have been taken in the case of this individual officer." That Question is directed to ascertaining whether any offence has been committed by an individual officer, and whether, if so, any particular action is necessary, and I say that no such contingency has arisen.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I will put the Question down in another form.

Efficiency in Naval Gunnery.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether, in view of the decision which had been arrived at by the Admiralty on 19th May, that no advantage to the service would accrue from causing it to be understood that the retention by admirals and captains of their respective commands will in future depend on the adequate shooting efficiency of the fleets or ships under their orders, he will inform the House what officers of a fleet or ship are held responsible for inadequate shooting efficiency.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: The Commander-in-Chief and all officers under his command whose duty it is to superintend and take part in the gunnery exercises of the Fleet are responsible, in their several degrees, for the shooting carried out by them or under their orders.

Naval Cadets.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, how many candidates between the ages of twelve and thirteen for naval cadetships under the new regulations have been nominated for the next examination; and how many of these are candidates whose parents or guardians would not agree that the candidate, if successful, should, at the discretion of the Admiralty, be posted to any one of the three branches of Engineers, Executives, or Marines.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: The First Lord has not yet given any nominations for the examination in question. The announcement which appeared in the newspapers of the 26th May, as to the course which the First Lord has decided to follow with regard to these nominations, is being adhered to. The number of candidates who are prepared to join any one of the three branches of the service is so great that no candidate will be nominated on whose behalf this undertaking has not been given.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Then there is to be no option. Every child who is nominated must become interchangeable.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: Not necessarily. Circumstances will decide the action of the parents. If the number of candidates entering continues to be as great, parents will see it is useless to enter boys for a single nomination.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): Will the candidates who get the highest marks not be given their choice.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: No, Sir, nor will it be necessary to make the choice for eight years after the examination has taken place.

Naval Medical and Accountant Officers.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if, in the re-adjustment of the relative ranks of medical and accountant officers of the Royal Navy, the position of senior assistant paymasters is to be removed; whether the rank of staff paymaster is to be abolished and an increased rank to be given to the senior officers of the department corresponding with that of chief paymasters in the Army.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: As I informed the hon. Member for South Meath on the 27th May,† an announcement on this subject may be expected shortly. I must ask the hon. Gentleman, therefore, to await this announcement, as no useful purpose could be served by giving information on points of detail pending the publication of the scheme as a whole.

Great Britain and Servia.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether His Majesty's Government have had any diplomatic relations with the new Servian Government; and whether His Majesty's Government intend to recognise in any way the men or the representatives of the men guilty of the recent murders.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg also to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, can he now state what attitude His Majesty's Government propose to adopt towards the persons now assuming to act as the Government of Servia; and whether any communications are proceeding with Foreign Powers with a view to common or concerted action.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): As I stated on Monday,‡ diplomatic relations between this country and Servia came to an end with the death of King Alexander and have not been renewed. His Majesty's Government have considered whether they should mark their reprobation of the crime which has disgraced the Servian capital by withdrawing His Majesty's representative at Belgrade. It has, however, been thought that, for the present, Sir G. Bonham should remain at his post, in order that he may watch and report upon events and that he may take whatever steps are necessary to protect British interests. He will not be accredited to the new Government nor will any steps be taken to accord official recognition to it until we are in possession of fuller information as to the circumstances under which it has come into power. We understand that the Powers in regard to whose attitude His Majesty's Government have received information are instructing their representatives to accept the provisional Government as the *de facto* authority with which current business is to be transacted.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Is it the intention of His Majesty's Government to demand from the new Servian Government the punishment of these murderers; and, in view of what has happened, will the Government remove the regicide's statue from this House?

MR. MALCOLM (Suffolk, Stowmarket): If the British Minister in Servia is not accredited what will his position be?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: That question relates to one of the technical subtleties of diplomatic usage, and should be addressed after notice to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

Interference with British Fishermen on the Dutch Coasts.

MR. DOUGHTY (Great Grimsby): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that the Dutch gunboat "Zeehond" arrested and boarded on the high seas the British steam trawler "Sete," and ordered him to haul his gear and follow him to New Dieppe; that the captain of the trawler protested, and proved that he was fishing between eight and nine miles from the land; that after being arrested and following the gunboat for several hours, the commander released him, stating that he had made a mistake, interpreting the regulation limit line to be twelve miles instead of three miles; and whether, in view of the loss to the owners, the captain, and crew in this case, and of the interference with British fishermen by the gunboats on the Dutch and German coasts, he will cause a full inquiry to be made.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxiii, 17.

‡ See page 946.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord CRANBORNE, Rochester): The matter has already been brought to the notice of the Foreign Office by the owners; and His Majesty's Minister at the Hague, under instructions from the Secretary of State, has already called the attention of the Dutch Government to the case, and has asked to be furnished with the results of the official inquiry into the matter.

Ministry of Commerce.

MR. HOULT (Cheshire, Wirrall): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state what arrangements have been made for conducting the promised inquiry to consolidate the commercial and trade interests of the country in one Department; what is the present position of the inquiry; and when he expects it to be completed.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): The terms of reference to the proposed Committee will be as follows:—"To consider the position and duties of the Board of Trade and of the Local Government Board, and to report whether any, and, if so, what alterations should be made in the constitution and *status* of these offices; also whether in the interests of administrative efficiency, any re-arrangement of duties between these Departments and other Government Departments is desirable." I am glad to say that Lord Jersey has agreed to be Chairman, and I hope to be able to announce very shortly the names of the other members of the Committee.

The Fiscal Inquiry.

MR. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the proposed inquiry into the fiscal system is to be undertaken at the public expense; and whether any Vote will appear on the Estimates with regard to it.

*MR. RITCHIE: The proposed inquiry will be undertaken by the public Departments concerned, and I do not anticipate that it will involve any expenditure which would require a special Vote.

Bovine Tuberculosis—Report of Royal Commission.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in view of the fact that the Report of the Royal Commission on Bovine Tuberculosis has been issued to officials, he will explain the delay in issuing it to the public; and whether the Government are considering the necessity of scheduling tuberculosis and paying compensation for confiscations made in the public interest.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. WALTER LONG, Bristol, S.): I am informed that no Report has been issued by the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis either to officials or others. As to the last part of the Question I must refer the hon. Member to my replies to previous Questions on this subject.†

Light Dues Reductions.

MR. CHARLES M'ARTHUR (Liverpool, Exchange): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Trade whether he is now in a position to state what reduction it is intended to make in the light dues; and whether the reduction will be retrospective.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BONAR LAW, Glasgow, Blackfriars): It is proposed to reduce the dues levied by the general lighthouse authorities by 12½ per cent., and to make the reduction take effect from the 1st April last.

Trade Statistics.

MR. NUSSEY (Pontefract): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has any figures or further information in relation to our foreign or colonial trade, not to be found in the Board of Trade Returns or Blue-books, which will facilitate the formation of public opinion as to the advisability or otherwise of adopting a preferential tariff in favour of our colonies; and, if so, if he will publish it.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxii, 1637.

MR. BONAR LAW: As the hon. Member is aware, the Board of Trade publish a number of Returns and Reports but I do not think that they have in their possession any Return or Report of a similar description which could be added to those already published. If the hon. Member will state any specific information he requires we shall consider whether it can be supplied.

Duties on British Goods Abroad.

MR. LAMBERT (Devonshire, South Molton): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what are the dates of the treaties by which the United States, Portugal, and other countries levy increased duties on certain classes of British imports; what articles are the subject of such treatment; to what extent has British trade been affected; and whether the Government have admitted it is in accordance with the most-favoured-nation treatment that British goods should be thus penalised.

MR. BONAR LAW: The dates of the reciprocal agreements under which the United States levy lower rates of duty on certain articles from certain foreign countries than on similar articles from the United Kingdom are:—Agreement with France, May, 1898; agreement with Germany, July, 1900; agreement with Italy, July, 1900. The dates of the Portuguese treaties according lower rates of import duty to foreign countries on certain articles than on similar imports from the United Kingdom are:—Treaty with Russia, July, 1895; treaty with Norway, December, 1894; treaty with Holland, July, 1894. The articles of the United Kingdom production affected are, in the case of the United States, paintings, statuary, and spirits; and, in the case of Portugal, certain classes of leather and of jute manufactures, tin manufactures, candles, and a few other articles of minor importance. It is not possible to state exactly the extent to which British trade has been affected by this differential treatment. The answer to the last part of the Question is in the negative.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Is there in existence at present a commercial treaty with Portugal containing a most-favoured-nation clause?

MR. BONAR LAW: I understand not, but the hon. Member will perhaps put down a Question.

MR. LAMBERT: Can the hon. Member give an approximate estimate of the British trade affected by the preferential duties?

MR. BONAR LAW: It would be difficult to give an estimate that would be of any value.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland): Cannot the hon. Member give the exports of British products before and after these treaties?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! Notice should be given of that question.

MR. HUMPHREYS-OWEN (Montgomery): Are these treaties printed in any Government publication, or are they accessible in any way in the library of the House?

MR. BONAR LAW: I think they are not accessible at present.

Castlecomer and Kilkenny Tramway.

MR. O'MARA (Kilkenny, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received resolutions from various local authorities, including the Kilkenny County Council, advocating the appropriation of a portion of the Equivalent Grant to build a railway or tramway from Castlecomer to Kilkenny; and whether this project is receiving consideration.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): The reply to this Question is in the affirmative.

Londonderry and Donegal Union Boundaries.

MR. O'DOHERTY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Commission appointed by the Lord Lieutenant to inquire into the Poor Law system will embrace an inquiry into the proposed change in the union boundaries of the counties Londonderry and Donegal; and, if so, when and where will the investigation take place.

MR. WYNDHAM: The reply to the first inquiry is in the affirmative. The Commission hope to hold a sitting at Londonderry early in August. Due notice will be given of the actual date of this and all other sittings of the Commission.

Vagrancy in Ireland.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Wexford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the Commission of Inquiry into the Irish Poor Law system have power to inquire into the question of vagrancy; and, if so, if he will suggest their considering the methods of dealing with this question in foreign countries, notably in the United States and Germany, with a view to devising some remedy for what is a growing social evil in Ireland.

MR. WYNDHAM: The Commission will inquire into the subject of vagrancy, and will be glad to receive evidence in respect of the methods adopted in foreign countries for dealing with the question.

The Land Bill and Life Annuitants.

MR. EDWARD MITCHELL (Fermanagh, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can say what will be the position of life annuitants under the Land Bill, and especially where annuities are in arrear; and if such will be reckoned under the table of annuities at present existing.

MR. WYNDHAM: The annuity will be valued, and its value, when ascertained, paid according to its priority out of the purchase-money. The arrears of the annuity are a charge upon the lands, and must be similarly paid. The value of the annuity will be ascertained by the Land Commission or Land Judge, as the case may be, with such actuarial assistance as may be necessary.

South Antrim Register of Voters.

MR. WOOD (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of freeholders and leaseholders in the county of the city of Belfast who are voters in South Antrim; whether he can state the number of them who are dead and the number of them who, although returned on the register as freeholders, hold no lands, having disposed of same twenty to forty years ago.

I beg also to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Belfast freeholders and leaseholders who are on the register of voters for South Antrim are also on the voters' list for the county of the city of Belfast, the revising barrister for the said city having decided that since the passing of the Local Government Act, 1898 (by which the city of Belfast was constitued a county), these freeholders and leaseholders are entitled to vote in the said county of the city of Belfast; whether he can state why were these freeholders and leaseholders not then removed from the list of voters for South Antrim; and whether any, and, if so, what steps will be taken to have them removed.

MR. WYNDHAM: The number of freeholders and leaseholders in the county of the city of Belfast who are registered as Parliamentary voters in South Antrim is 1,435. The matters referred to in the second part of the Question, and in the next Question also in the name of the same hon. Member, are matters to be investigated and decided upon by the Revising Barrister at the Annual Revision Sessions.

Planter Tenants and Derelict Farms.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether immediate steps will be taken by him to prevent, pending the passing of the present Land Bill, the letting of derelict farms in county Longford and elsewhere in Ireland to planter tenants with a view to the exclusion of the evicted tenants or their representatives.

MR. WYNDHAM: No, Sir.

Corglass and Comakelly Townland Tenants.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland can he state the cause of delay in the transfer to the tenants of the O'Brien, Dundas, and Smyth estates, in the townlands of Corglass and Comakelly, the tenants of which had made arrangements with their landlords to purchase, and the latter being avowedly anxious to sell: whether, seeing that proceedings are now pending in the matter, he will urge the Land Commission to push forward the sales and transfer without any further delay.

MR. WYNDHAM: Proceedings for the sale of the lands in question have not, so far, been instituted in the Land Commission.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that on a previous occasion he promised to make representations on the subject to the Land Judge.

MR. WYNDHAM: There appears to be some misapprehension. The matter must come before the Land Commission, and I am told it has not yet reached that stage. I will inquire further, however, if the hon. Member desires.

Potato Spraying in Co. Kerry.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, seeing that farmers in the county Kerry have asked the Congested Districts Board for assistance to procure machines for potato spraying, he will state what will be done to assist them in this much needed work.

MR. WYNDHAM: Only one such application has been made to the Board from Kerry this year, and it has been complied with on the usual terms. Two of the Board's officers will give demonstrations in spraying in the county.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: Has any information been given to the local authorities on the subject?

MR. WYNDHAM: I think it is a matter of common knowledge.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL: On what conditions are machines provided?

MR. WYNDHAM: I must ask for notice of that.

Irish Public Department Audits.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware of the fact that a proposition was made some years since by an official that the audit of a certain Irish Public Department could be more conveniently and efficiently carried on in Dublin; and, seeing that it was practically decided to appoint a permanent staff for the purpose, will he explain why the intention was not carried into effect.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. ELLIOT, Durham): I have been unable to trace the proposal alluded to by the hon. Member. If he will give me details showing which was the Department in question, and in what year the proposal was made, I will give the matter my attention.

Audit of Irish Public Accounts.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the fact that the audit of all Irish Public Accounts is mainly carried on in the Audit Office, London, although Devonport Dockyard Accounts are audited in Devonport by a permanent staff; and whether, with a view to economy and efficiency, he will consider the advisability of applying the same system to the general audit of Irish Public Accounts and provide accommodation for a permanent staff in the new Government buildings about to be erected in Dublin.

MR. ELLIOT: Portions of the Irish accounts, such as Public Education and Post Office accounts, are periodically examined in Dublin to avoid the inconvenience of forwarding the local records from Ireland. But it has been found to be more convenient that the ordinary accounts of receipts and expenditure of Irish Departments should be audited in London.

Irish Lights.

MR. MOONEY (Dublin Co., S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the fact that on the 3rd of March last he intimated to the Commissioners of Irish Lights that they had for some time past neglected their duties as regards periodical inspections, and called upon them to carry out the duties imposed upon them by The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, and that this neglect has extended over a considerable period of time, he will state what steps he proposes to take to make the Irish Lights Commissioners carry out the duties imposed upon them by statute.

MR. BONAR LAW: The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, imposes upon general lighthouse authorities the duty of inspecting lighthouses, buoys, and beacons belonging to local lighthouse authorities, and I have reason to hope that the representation which has been addressed to the Commissioners will receive their attention.

Preferential Tariffs—Mr. Seddon's Speech in New Zealand.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has received any confirmation of a speech having been made in New Zealand by Mr. Seddon, stating that, if the United Kingdom does not grant certain of the produce of New Zealand preferential fiscal treatment over such produce from foreign sources, New Zealand will enter into reciprocity fiscal treaties with foreign countries; whether the Government of this country has already recognised the right of the self-governing colonies to enter into such reciprocity treaties with foreign nations; and whether, if so, this involves the right of foreign countries to regard our self-governing colonies as fiscal entities in all regarding import and export duties.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): I have received no confirmation of the speech referred to. Reciprocal arrangements have been in a few special cases negotiated by the Imperial Government on behalf of colonies with foreign Powers, but such arrangements have not in any way impaired the right of such colonies to make such arrangements as they deemed fit with each other or with this country.

In reply to a further question by Mr. Labouchere—

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN said no arrangements can be made between the colonies and foreign countries except through the Imperial Government.

The Government Fiscal Inquiry.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in the inquiry by the Government as to the advisability of taxing food, oral evidence will be received; and, if so, before whom and by whom such evidence will be heard; whether the inquiry will commence before the prorogation of Parliament; and, if so, whether a Supplementary Vote will be taken for its cost; whether any portion of the inquiry will devolve on the Treasury.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Certainly I trust that those who look into this matter will not confine themselves to written communications, and if they do not, it is clear that oral communications will be included. I told the hon. Member yesterday that the persons responsible for the inquiry are the Cabinet. The inquiry will certainly commence before the prorogation, and of course has commenced already, and there is no question of a future date. It is now engaging the attention of the Government. I have no reason to believe that a Supplementary Vote will be required; and of course the Treasury, in common with other Departments concerned, will give the best assistance it can to the Government in the prosecution of this investigation.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Is it intended to publish the oral communications and the written communications that are sent to the Departments receiving them?

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): As we understand this inquiry, it is for the purpose of informing the people of this country, and not the members of the Cabinet only.

May I ask what steps will be taken and what course will be followed in order to communicate to the nation the nature and effect of the evidence obtained?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: That is a question which is evidently premature. The object of the present investigation is first to enable those at present responsible for the government of the country to deal with a very complicated problem, By what means the discussion in public and the information of the public is to be managed at a subsequent period does not arise now.

SIR. H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Then the first stage of the inquiry is solely for the information of the Cabinet?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Of course it is.

MR. LABOUCHERE: May I ask whether the President of the Council was wrong in saying a day or two ago somewhere, while advocating a public inquiry, that if the question were kept to the end it would have to be submitted to an unprepared Party and to unprepared constituencies, and, if so, how the right hon. Gentleman meets that.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not understand the point of the hon. Member's question.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs): Is the whole question to be referred to a Committee of the Cabinet, or will it be considered by the Government as a whole?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have gone far beyond what is usual in explaining the course which we intend to pursue. Hon. Gentlemen opposite seem to think that this is the first time in British history that a Cabinet has ever inquired into anything. I can assure them that that is a mistake; and I am not aware that this inquiry differs from previous inquiries conducted by this or by previous Governments on questions at least equally important.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Is this a secret inquiry or is it not?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It is secret precisely to the same extent as, and no further than, all similar inquiries undertaken by other Governments in the past.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): Then does the Prime Minister reject the idea of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that it must not be a secret inquiry?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! That is obviously referring to a debate in the House of Lords.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the inquiry into the proposed new fiscal arrangements with the self-governing colonies is to be limited to the expediency of a duty upon food supplies from them entering the United Kingdom; or whether it is to embrace the consideration of allowing any of their raw materials being also taxed on entry.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not propose to suggest any limitations.

Canada and the German Tariff.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether any correspondence or negotiations took place between the British and German Governments in each or any of the years 1900, 1901, or 1902, in regard to the fiscal treatment of Canada; whether any such correspondence or negotiations took place within the twelve months ending the 1st of May, 1903; whether the British Government have re-opened negotiations since the 1st of May last; and whether any correspondence took place between the British and German Governments in consequence of the failure of the negotiations between Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the German Consul at Montreal in the autumn of 1901.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No correspondence in regard to the subject mentioned took place with the German Government in the years 1900, 1901, or 1902. Correspondence with the German Government was resumed in 1903, shortly before the date mentioned in the Question. No correspondence took place between the

Governments in consequence of the failure of the negotiations in Montreal in 1901.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: Then it is not right to say that "persistent representations" have been made to the German Government?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have given the hon. Member the facts. He can draw his own conclusions.

New South Wales and the Government Declarations.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I desire to ask the right hon. Gentleman a Question of which I have given him private notice. I wish to ask whether he is aware that the Premier of New South Wales has now stated that the declarations referred to in the recent message of his Government were contained in the speeches delivered by the Colonial Secretary and the right hon. Gentleman himself, and whether he will take steps to correct by messages to the Government of that colony this misapprehension of those speeches, seeing that the House was assured that, pending inquiry to be undertaken by the Government, no conclusion would be formed and no action would be taken.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Sir, I have received no information confirming the intelligence of the right hon. Gentleman, which I believe appears in the newspapers. There is no telegram at the Colonial Office conveying the information.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The telegram is from the Premier of New South Wales.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Well, it has not been received, I am informed, at the Colonial Office. As regards the second and inferential part of the right hon. Gentleman's Question, I can only say that I have nothing either to withdraw, or, so far as I know, to explain in the speech to which he refers.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Does the right hon. Gentleman still think that the declaration refers to some documents of 1897?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have not the smallest conception, but it might.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I beg to ask the Prime Minister when the debates on the Irish Land Bill are likely to be resumed after being interrupted by the Committee stage of the Finance Bill.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I hope that the questions to be raised on the Committee stage of the Finance Bill are not of a kind to give rise to any prolonged debate, and, so far as I am aware, there will be no difficulty in resuming the Irish Land Bill after the Committee stage of the Budget is passed. Of course the Third Reading will have to be taken before the date I have mentioned, in order to enable the Act to become law before 30th June.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Then, in all probability, so far as I understand, the Irish Land Bill will not be taken next week.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Oh, I hope it will.

Mr. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): May I ask the Chief Secretary whether, in view of the discussion last night and the vote taken he proposes to withdraw the Irish Land Bill?

Mr. WYNDHAM: No, Sir.

NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT AND PREFERENTIAL TARIFFS—MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs) rose in his place and asked leave to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance—viz., "the misunderstanding created in the mind of the Government of the colony of New South Wales by the speeches of the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary, and the necessity of making it clear to the Government of New South Wales that these speeches are isolated expressions of opinion to which the Cabinet is in no way committed;" and the pleasure of the House having been signified,

The Motion stood over, under Standing Order No. 10, until the Evening Sitting this day.

SELECTION.

Mr. **Halsey** reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following Member from the Joint Committee of Lords and Commons on the Port of London Bill: Sir Alexander Henderson; and had appointed in substitution: Sir Charles Renshaw.

Report to lie upon the Table.

UNION OF BENEFICES ACT (1860) AMENDMENT BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 247.]

POST OFFICE SITES BILL.

Ordered, That Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Sir Thomas Firbank, and Mr. Rose be Members of the Select Committee on the Post Office Sites Bill.—(*Sir Alexander Acland-Hood.*)

PUBLIC OFFICES (DUBLIN) BILL.

Ordered, That Mr. Elliot, Mr. Boland, and Mr. Charles Allen be Members of the Select Committee on the Public Offices (Dublin) Bill.—(*Sir Alexander Acland-Hood.*)

IRISH LAND BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. **Lowther** (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:—

Mr. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.) said they had now reached the second of the most important questions raised by the Irish Land Bill. During the first two days the Committee had been discussing the subject of the minimum price, and of course it was fresh in the recollection of everybody what attitude had been taken by the Irish Members towards that provision. He believed that the question he now proposed to raise—viz., the omission of the perpetual rent-charge, was equally as important as the subject of the minimum price. He did not think the Chief Secretary could have been well advised when he sought to impose a perpetual rent-charge on future tenant purchasers in Ireland. This was the sixth Land Purchase Bill which had been introduced to the notice of Parliament, and four of the measures had been passed into law, but in no previous instance had it been sought to impose a perpetual rent-charge on tenant purchasers. They were consequently face to face with what might be described as a new phase of the Irish land question. Neither from the sentimental side nor from the side of utility was the proposal to fix a perpetual rent-charge on tenant purchasers necessary or called for. If there was one thing more absolutely clear to the minds of every Irish Member of Parliament interested in the settlement of the land question than another, it was that the Irish tenant farmers wanted the land, the whole land, and nothing but the land, and would never assent to any proposal to put a never-ending rent-charge burden on their backs, and on the backs of those who followed them in the occupation of their holdings. Let the Committee examine how the proposal would work out. Neither in a sentimental nor in a prosaic way would such a scheme give satisfaction to the Irish tenants. The great interest which had been raised in the Bill, and the great hopes which had been excited in the minds and hearts of the Irish people were based on the fact that for ever and ever they were to be relieved of the presence at their doors of the bailiff, or rent collector, or landlord's agent. But this proposal put another official in the place of the rent collector. He did not know, of course, what machinery it was proposed to create for the collection of the permanent charge, but he ventured to assert that the scheme, whatever it might be, would prove the very foundation of the undoing of the work of the Purchase Acts passed by the House. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary in his speech on the First Reading of the Bill, said one of the objects was to prevent sub-letting and dividing. But he did not think it could for one moment be alleged that that object would be attained by the resurrection of the gombeen system. Why should it be necessary to impose on the tenants a perpetual charge of 2¾ per cent. on the purchase money? He could understand the proposal if the Chief Secretary had provided that the money thus collected, and the fund thereby accumulated, should be used for the development of the country, or for the reduction of taxation, but, so far as he could see, no such proposal was contemplated, and he thought he might fairly describe this permanent rent-charge as an absolutely derelict proposal for the collection of money of which practically they were to get no account. It might be suggested by the right hon. Gentleman that the object was to provide additional security for the British taxpayer. But he felt inclined to agree with the hon. Member who had observed that the British taxpayer was well able to take care of himself. So far as the people of Ireland were concerned, they had it on the authority of a Royal Commission that to the Irish people the British taxpayer represented excessive and over-taxation.

The Chief Secretary did not attempt to justify his proposal on the ground that it was necessary to retain one-eighth of the purchase money, and to collect from the tenant farmers $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. as an additional security for John Bull. Then on what ground of equity and justice could the proposal be defended? There was no provision in the Bill for the future administration of the fund thus to be accumulated, or for its application to any purpose which would be of use to the people from whom it was to be collected. On what ground did the right hon. Gentleman make so large a charge upon the tenants? In the whole world there could not be found people so desirous, he might almost say devoted, to keeping their obligations as the Irish. That was admitted over and over again by the right hon. Gentleman. He regarded the proposal of the perpetual rent-charge as unnecessary and unjust and certain to provoke the tenant farmer of Ireland. It would undo the work of land purchase because it placed the tenant in a worse position than his neighbours who had purchased under other Land Acts, and placed over their heads the shadow of another landlordism in the shape of the British collector. This Amendment raised a very important issue. No case had been made for the inclusion of these words in the Bill save the theory that it was good to provide against sub-division, mortgage, and so forth. He desired that as much as anyone, and was perfectly prepared to assent to any moderate proposal which had that object in view, and which would save the farmer from the grabber and the gombeen man. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, lines 21 and 22, to leave out the words 'and perpetual rent-charge.'"—(*Mr. J. B. Farrell.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN (Cork) said he hoped it would not be difficult to convince the Chief Secretary that this notion of a perpetual rent-charge was an unfortunate innovation in Irish land legislation. Nobody asked for it and nobody in Ireland wanted it except those who favoured nationalisation of the land, who were a very small minority. In reference to this proposal there could be no repetition of the somewhat unscrupulous treatment of yesterday by some spokesmen of the landlord party on the minimum prices. This proposal did not come from the landlord quarter. It did not emanate from either the landlords or the tenants in conference, and not a single member of either Irish Party had a single word to say in its favour. They were perfectly willing to accept any additional protection, any nominal reservation, which might be necessary as a protection against excessive mortgaging if there was any necessity. But was there any necessity? For sixty-eight years, at all events, this perpetual rent-charge was superfluous as a check against excessive mortgaging or sub-letting, and if this matter had to be dealt with at the end of that time, it might safely be left to those who came after, who would approach the matter under different conditions. It introduced a new and highly dangerous element into Irish land legislation. To the Irish farmer the whole charm of this Bill was the notion of property and the notion that the holding would be his own and that no man could ever interfere with him, but this perpetual rent-charge would be a perpetual reminder to him that he was not the holder but that some power which was not even defined, could step in and affect his interest in his property, with what object none at present saw, while the purchaser would be always faced with the fact that his 80,000 neighbours who purchased under the Ashbourne Acts were absolute owners of the fee simple.

Irish land legislation was complicated enough without this new proposal. This proposal might contain the seeds of considerable trouble in Ireland in the future. There was a considerable feeling and a justifiable feeling of soreness in the minds of the agricultural labourers and the working classes of the towns, who thought too much was being absorbed by the farmers. He sympathised with the agricultural labourers and hoped they would be able in the future to devise means of doing justice to them. If the impression were once created that this perpetual rent-charge was an acknowledgment that one-eighth of the holding did not belong to the tenant at all, then there might be material for a considerable agitation. Ireland was not a new country, it was an old country, and those experiments could not be tried as they might be in a new. In this Bill the Government violated the principle that the holdings should be the complete property of the tenants, and gave nobody in Ireland any interest in the money collected. If they took upon themselves the odium of collecting what amounted to a second rent-charge they would leave the impression in the minds of the tenant that they, instead of being better off than when they were under the Ashbourne Acts, were worse off. He would not further detain the Committee now, as other great questions, such as those dealing with the purchase price, the evicted tenants, and the congested districts, remained to be decided. He would only say that he could not see what attraction this charge, which was so objectionable to the people of Ireland, could have to any party to the bargain, and he begged the Chief Secretary not to force upon them this new and unheard of complication, which was fraught with considerable danger to the peace of Ireland, and would create such discontent in the minds of the tenant farmers as to destroy the virtue of the other proposals.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover) said he shared the anxiety of the hon. Member to get to the consideration of the important questions to which he referred. It would be inconvenient if they could not in some way avoid a prolonged discussion on the rent-charge at the present stage, when they all desired to get to the subject which was very present to their minds. It had been argued that this rent-charge would perpetuate the idea that the purchaser was still a payer of rent, and that he would own only seven-eighths of his property. All he would say was that the question of the rent-charge would come up in Clause 40, and he suggested that it should be then discussed, he giving an undertaking to approach the question with an open mind, and with a disposition carefully to weigh the reasons which might be urged in favour of or against having such a provision in the Bill. He had previously contended, and was prepared, if necessary, to contend again, that this protection might in some cases be needed during the sixty-eight years. The danger he had in his mind, which might be remote, but was certainly possible, was that of persons other than those who purchased under the Act, buying up holdings, paying off the liabilities, and stealing away with all the advantages of the credit of the general taxpayer, to create holdings of a very undesirable description outside the Land Acts. It would be more convenient now to pass to a subject more germane to that which was under discussion yesterday, and he hoped, with the undertaking he had given, the Committee would agree to discuss the question of the rent-charge on Clause 40.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) pointed out that if the words were passed now the Committeee would be committed to the principle of the rent-charge. While he desired to get the Bill for what it might be worth, it was necessary to be very careful where they were going and what they were doing.

MR. WYNDHAM explained that if, after discussion on Clause 40, it was decided to abandon the rent-charge, he should bring up a Government Amendment on the Report stage.

*MR T. W. RUSSELL said he was exceedingly unwilling that the Committee should sanction a novel principle such as this without debating it. The hon. Member for Cork had implied that the whole of the Irish representatives were opposed to this proposal. But that was no reason for supposing the House of Commons would not pass it. On the contrary, that was the very reason why the House of Commons was likely to pass it. When it was remembered that last night a proposal of a most grave and vital character was carried over the heads of the Irish Members, who were absolutely unanimous against it, what reason was there for supposing that on Clause 40 the unanimity of Irish representatives would be worth a brass farthing? The matter must be threshed out before the principle was affirmed. For seventeen years there had been in operation in Ireland a land code which had been a success because to a large extent it had the assent of the Irish people. It was the one class of Irish legislation for which this House had been responsible in the last twenty years that had worked satisfactorily. There had been none of the bogies conjured up by the Chief Secretary, and why should they be anticipated now? The real secret of the success of past purchase measures had been the sense of ownership. All the while a tenant felt that he was working for another, and that if he improved the land his rent would be raised, the land remained unimproved; but immediately the landlord was got out of the way the tenant began to improve his holding. The Chief Secretary now proposed to destroy that sense of ownership, and to establish for all time the overlordship of the Crown. In his Second Reading speech the right hon. Gentleman said it was necessary to control sub-dividing, sub-letting, and reckless mortgaging. But by Clause 49 sub-dividing was absolutely prohibited for sixty-eight-and-a-half years, and reckless mortgaging was provided against for the same period. Therefore anything that was done now was for the period beyond sixty-eight-and-a-half years. Why should the Committee interest themselves so much in the people who would occupy the land seventy years hence? Unless he was mistaken Ireland would then be in such a position that the people would be able to take care of themselves. It seemed as though a Conservative Government was capable of doing anything. Who would have imagined that the first step towards the nationalisation of land in Ireland would have come from a Conservative Government? That was the principle contended for by Mr. Michael Davitt, and the Chief Secretary was adopting it.

DR. THOMPSON (Monaghan, N.): Then there must be something in it.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said there was something in most proposals. He would like, however, to see the hon. Member not only accept the doctrine in the House of Commons, but also go "on stump" in North Monaghan.

DR. THOMPSON said he was not in the least afraid of "taking the stump" in North Monaghan.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said the Conservative Government were actually proposing to insert the thin end of the wedge of land nationalisation in Ireland. That might be done in a new country, but Ireland was the last country in the world where such an experiment ought to be tried. If they were going to differentiate in this matter between the 80,000 tenants who had bought and those who would buy under this Act they would be laying the very seeds of disease that would produce trouble, and they would land themselves in endless difficulties. He was not prepared to wait until Clause 40 was reached, and he hoped the Committee would not consent to leave this question in abeyance.

MR. WYNDHAM said that this was one of those questions upon which he attached great importance to the united opinion of Ireland. The hon. Member for South Tyrone seemed to think that his word was not sufficient in regard to this Amendment.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: No, no.

MR. WYNDHAM said the hon. Member had been discussing in rather a heated manner a subject of far less importance than the subjects discussed yesterday without any heat at all. His suggestion was that they might defer this point to a later clause, but if that was not the view of hon. Members from

Ireland, he had such a sense of the importance of saving time that he would accept the Amendment. He deprecated the heated declarations of his hon. friend on a minor point like this, and he had no objection whatever to deleting the words which had been proposed to be struck out.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) said he entirely agreed that it was not necessary to introduce the slightest heat into this discussion. The Chief Secretary had stated that he would keep an open mind until Clause 40 was reached, but that was not at all satisfactory. The right hon. Gentleman must have considered this matter very carefully, and he knew the unanimity of feeling upon this point in Ireland. He took it for granted that the Chief Secretary had come to some conclusion upon the point, and he thought the best course to pursue would be for him to inform the Committee at once. With regard to the right hon. Gentleman's request that they ought to agree to postpone this question, he would remind him that in the case he alluded to, there were certain words in the early part of the clause which limited the amount of advance to be given in certain cases, and they pressed upon the Government that they should insert the words "As amended in this Bill." In this case however the words stated that there should be a perpetual rent-charge, and the right hon. Gentleman asked them to put those words into the clause and then adjourn the question. That was a most inconvenient course. There was an Amendment on the Paper to Clause 40, standing in the name of his hon. friend who had moved this Amendment, dealing with the exact amount of the perpetual rent-charge.

Mr. WYNDHAM thought if this was carried there could be no discussion of the point again on Clause 40.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND thought the simplest way would be to accept the Amendment. [An Hon. Member: The Chief Secretary has agreed to delete those words.]

Mr. JOHN REDMOND said if that were so he need not proceed.

Mr. WYNDHAM thought that if they took out these words they would shut out the question for ever, but he agreed that if they left them in they would commit themselves. This was, however, only a minor matter, and he desired to proceed to the discussion of the more important questions. All he desired was to get on, and he was willing to accept the Amendment.

Mr. COGHILL (Stoke-upon-Trent) said he had risen to make a complaint. This was the second case already in which the right hon. Gentleman had thrown over safeguards in the Bill. He had up to the present supported the right hon. Gentleman when he said that he was going to stick to what he proposed upon the introduction of this measure. Already the Chief Secretary was beginning to talk about Bills which would have to be brought in during another session in order to amend this.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) asked if the remarks of the hon. Member for Stoke were germane to the omission of the words which had been proposed.

Mr. COGHILL said the Chief Secretary for Ireland seemed to be afraid of what would take place in the Division Lobby, but he assured him that he need have no such fear. The hon. and learned Member for Waterford could have defeated the Government at any time during the afternoon of yesterday had he been so disposed, but he kept his supporters addressing the House in order to avoid a division.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND said there was not one scintilla of truth in that statement.

Mr. COGHILL said that was how the question had struck the outsider. He hoped the Chief Secretary would not make any further concessions. [Ironical Nationalist cheers.] After the speeches the Chief Secretary had delivered in this House and after obtaining the sanction of the House to the Second Reading of this Bill upon the distinct pledges he gave to the House, he thought the right hon. Gentleman ought to adhere to them.

MR. T. M. HEALY: As the Chief Secretary is now in a giving mood perhaps he could give the hon. Member for Stoke a job.

MR. WYNDHAM said this was not a question of zones, but a purely administrative question. Let them get rid of this point and get on with the Bill.

Question put and negatived.

Amendment agreed to.

MR. JOHN REDMOND asked if after what had taken place yesterday he should be in order in moving the Amendment which stood in his name on the Paper.

*THE CHAIRMAN: The question discussed yesterday was whether there were to be any zones at all. I think this Amendment raises a somewhat different question, and if the hon. Member wishes to move it I do not think I should be justified in ruling that the question had already been discussed, although I know that a considerable amount of debate yesterday turned upon this point.

MR. JOHN REDMOND said he would move to leave out of line 23 of Clause 1 the word "ten," and insert "fifteen." The effect of his Amendment was to alter the minimum reduction in this zone from 10 to 15 per cent. He did not think it was necessary to use many words upon this occasion, because the arguments on this point had already been dealt with by other hon. Members as well as himself. Their belief was that the limit of 10 per cent. was too low, and that, owing to various reasons, certain classes of tenants might perhaps be induced to pay more for their land than from an economical point of view they were justified in doing. This was not a limit to which they attached the most importance. They did attach considerable importance however to this point. Their idea of an ideal settlement would be to raise this limit from ten to fifteen, and abolish the other altogether. He must move the Amendment in order to state his protest, which he had no doubt hon. Members sitting around him would think it their duty to emphasise in this matter. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 23, to leave out the word 'ten,' and insert the word 'fifteen.'"—(*Mr. John Redmond.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'ten' stand part of the Clause."

*SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth) thought the Government would do well to stand by the limit of ten in the Bill. After all he could not see that by making it fifteen there would be very much gained. If they took the case of a £10 holder it really meant a difference of 10s. and no more. If the Committee looked at the whole question of maximum and minimum he thought that both sides were perhaps attaching exaggerated importance to the question. He knew that English Members were considerably confused by the different methods of stating this question. In some cases it was put as the maximum and minimum reduction, and in other cases it was put as the maximum and minimum price. He would like to show exactly the real meaning of this question, and for that purpose he would take as an illustration the case of the £10 holder. He did not think that the House realised what Parliament had done in the way of benefiting the tenants of Ireland at the expense of the landlords. Great changes had been made in the relations between landlords and tenants. He was not now dealing with the question whether it was right or wrong to make these changes, or whether the landlords had a grievance or not. The question now before the Committee was whether a £10 holder now was to get a minimum reduction of 10 or 15 per cent. He wanted to put before the Committee the history of this £10 holder. In the first place he was at a certain rent in 1881, when an Act was passed and his rent was reduced, according to a Return showing the average, by 20 per cent. After fifteen years under the Act of 1896, his rent was further reduced by 20 per cent., and that brought it to £10. Turned into figures it came to this, that that man's original rent was £16 before the passing of the Act of 1881. The question was whether a man who in 1881 was paying a rent of £16 was now badly treated if he was asked to accept State purchase at a rent 10 per cent. below the £10 which he was paying. It really came to this—that they were asking him to pay half his original rent and to become a State tenant. There were so many important questions dealt with in this Bill that, in connection with this particular matter, he thought they were really justified in saying that the landlords considered that the minimum of 10 per cent. sufficiently safeguarded the interest of the State. The question the Committee had now to consider was whether a difference of 5 per cent. would deter or promote purchase. He presumed that the hon. and learned Member for Waterford had only one object in his mind, namely, to promote purchase. If it was the hon. and learned Member's object to induce the tenant to buy, obviously his object must also be to induce landlords to sell. The landlords were the men in position whom they had to show that it would be to their advantage to sell. He put it to the Committee would 5 per cent. make all that difference? They started with this basis that the Government considered after examination of the whole question—that a 10 per cent. minimum was a sufficient safeguard for the State, and therefore they could dismiss the British taxpayer altogether from the question. It was the business of the Government to look after the general taxpayer. Was it worth while to waste a great deal of time over this difference of 5 per cent.? [NATIONALIST laughter.] That was his way of looking at it.

MR. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): Let the Chief Secretary accept the Amendment and not waste any more time.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB: The Government considered that 10 per cent. was a sufficient safeguard for the general taxpayer. If he was mis-stating the case the Government, of course, would correct his statement. But he said that so far as this minimum reduction went the security of the State was covered by the figure in the Bill. Hon. Members on the other side of the House who were concerned in the matter said that an addition of 5 per cent. was after all not a very considerable matter. But they considered that by the increase of the minimum reduction above what was necessary to secure, the State was really to do something directed against the interest of the landlord. In regard to this minimum reduction, what the hon. and learned Member for Waterford had got to show was not that it would be beneficial to the tenant—of course, anything they got off the price was beneficial to the tenant—but that under this voluntary Bill the interests of the landlord must also be considered. He reminded the hon. and learned Member for Waterford that at the Conference it was agreed that the general minimum reduction should be only calculated on the basis necessary to secure the landlords income at 3 per cent. He trusted that the Government would adhere, for the reasons he had given, to the 10 per cent. in the clause and not increase it, because that might have the effect of deterring some large landlords from selling.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: Fifteen per cent. minimum is the actual figure in the Conference Report which was agreed to by the landlords.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB said that somehow or other they had got away from the Conference Report. But they were bound by the Conference declaration, which was exactly in the line of the Landlords' Convention declaration, that the landlord should receive as purchase money a sum which should guarantee an income for him at 3 or 3¼ per cent. An addition of 5 per cent. to the limit stated in the Bill might in some cases prevent the landlord from getting what he should have. He put it to the hon. and learned Member whether the acceptance of the Amendment would not really, instead of encouraging, deter landlords from selling. He asked the hon. and learned Member whether, without prejudice to other questions, they could not arrange to leave the figure at 10 per cent. as it was put in the Bill?

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said that the hon. and gallant Member spoke of the desirability of not wasting time, and yet he had occupied an hour and a-half in discussing an Amendment which he himself had described as exceedingly trifling. If 5 per cent. was such a small matter, why did not the Chief Secretary accept the Amendment and have done with it? He confessed he would have been better pleased if the hon. Member for Waterford had moved 20 per cent. instead of 15. The principle involved in the Amendment was important. He was against the principle of these zones and limitations *in toto*, and after what had occurred the previous night this clause was objectionable from beginning to end. The clause would be used for raising the general level of price of land in Ireland. They had been asked to set up a standard by which the landlords might combine to demand from their tenants a mean price between the two limits. The Chief Secretary spoke of the clause as offering to the tenants an opportunity of purchasing their holdings at eighteen years purchase on first-term rents, and twenty-two years purchase on second-term rents: but did the Chief Secretary ask them to believe that all the tenants of Ireland, or any considerable section of them, were going to get the minimum price? They had heard a great deal about combinations amongst the tenants to bring pressure to bear on the landlords, but nothing of the combination of the landlords. There was such a combination, and what they wanted was twenty-eight years purchase. If the tenants gave them twenty-five years purchase they did not care where the rest came from.

*Sir JOHN COLOMB said that twenty-eight years purchase would be on the basis of second-term rents which had been reduced.

Mr. DILLON said he could not understand the hon. and gallant Member, who did not seem even yet to have grasped the principles of the Bill. As he understood the application of these limits, the maximum price would be twenty-eight years purchase and the minimum about twenty-two on second-term rents as they now stood; and the mean would be twenty-five years purchase. That was what they were told the landlords would combine for. He was speaking of the great mass of the tenants who could not plead exceptional circumstances. What they were, in fact, asked to consent to, was to raise the general average level of second-term rents of tenancies in Ireland to a purchase price of twenty-five years, as against eighteen to nineteen years purchase at the present time. The proposal of the hon. Member for Waterford was most moderate, and he supported it strongly because it tended to bring down the level of the mean price. The hon. and gallant Member said, "Why not consider the case of the poor landlords?" But what would be the effect of this Amendment? The landlord would be debarred from taking from the tenantry more than six years purchase in addition to what they had ever paid before. And the hon. and gallant Member complained that that was a hardship on the landlords! But that was not all, because account had not been taken of the bonus. The hon. and gallant Member's complaint, therefore, was that the landlords were to be penalised by the Amendment because, if it was passed they would not be able to get more than ten years purchase more than they got under the present law. That was the case of the Irish landlords. He had been accustomed to see extraordinary demands put forward in this House on behalf of the Irish landlords, but all paled into insignificance before that of the hon. and gallant Member. He thought it was extremely important that they should make a determined effort by moving Amendments to this clause and discussing them moderately, to set forth to the best of their ability the realities of the clause, which he was convinced had not been grasped by the majority of the English Members of the House.

*Mr. BUTCHER (York) said he hoped that the Chief Secretary would adhere to the limitations he had proposed. They had been rightly told that it would be desirable to give some more elasticity to the limits than the Land Conference proposed; in other words, to increase the power of bargaining by 5 per cent. on each side of the limits, leaving the average reduction precisely the same as it was before—viz., 20 per cent. It seemed to him that if the hon. Member for Waterford desired to go back to the Conference terms upon one limit, he ought to go back to the Conference terms on the other limit; and if he cut off 5 per cent. extra bargaining power in one direction, he ought to cut it off on the other. No doubt the hon. Member would not like to do it in the second case, but he urged the Government to adhere to the terms which they had given, and which would give effect to an increased power of bargaining to landlord and tenant.

MR. T. M. HEALY said there was another reason than that already stated why he appealed to the Government and the landlords to accept the Amendment. He thought he was right in saying that the view of the Land Conference was that 10 per cent. was the cost of collection. In his judgment that was an error so far as the tenants were concerned. It erred on the side of generosity and in favour of the landlords. If they took 5 per cent. for agent's fees; if they took the loss by legal expenses whether for the issue of writs or processes; if they took likewise the loss to the tenants through bad seasons and mortality amongst their cattle; if they took the loss which constantly arose from illness of the tenant or death—he was told that on the best estates in Munster that at least would be 15 per cent., and on the slum holdings it would run from 20 to 25 per cent. He thought that when the Conference made the agreement of 10 per cent. all round they arrived at a most generous decision. He appealed to any hon. Gentleman with experience in Irish administration to say, when the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General for Ireland were drawing such a Bill as this, whether they would put the wastage on any estate at less than 20 per cent. Mr. Gladstone's Bill put the losses and the outgoings at 20 per cent., and therefore he thought they were in a position to say that as regarded this Amendment the terms of the Land Conference ought to be insisted upon. In the first instance the Government had taken 20 per cent., and the proposition of the Conference on that head was 15 per cent. Would it not be fair to ask the landlord party opposite whether they were not bound by their own code of honour to adopt the treaty arranged by their own representatives in conference assembled? He personally felt bound by the decision arrived at by the three gentlemen who represented the side of the tenants; and that being so, hon. Members opposite ought to adhere in a similar way to a decision out of which they would obtain numerous benefits. In a treaty of this kind, where persons were taking benefits, they could not approbate and reprobate; and if the tenants in this matter said they were willing to rely upon the Conference figures, surely that bound the landlords. It was not a matter merely for the Chief Secretary, but one of a solemn obligation on both Parties. He appealed to the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh to say whether, under the circumstances he did not feel that he was as much bound as they were.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) said that he was not a party to the Conference. He refused to join it; but he acknowledged that the Conference did very good work. He did not, however, feel bound at all by it. It did not represent him, nor, he thought, the majority of the Irish landlords; but he thought that the majority of the Irish landlords acknowledged the merits of the work done at the Conference; and, so far as he was concerned, and he believed also so far as the landlords were concerned, they supported the line taken by the Conference. With regard to the question now before the Committee, the Amendment was not so much against the landlords, but it narrowed the region of bargaining. Hon. Gentlemen opposite would rather not have any zones of any kind; but when they had established zones, to raise the minimum from 10 per cent. to 15 per cent. would, in his opinion, narrow the area of bargaining. His own opinion was, that when a landlord made an agreement with a tenant they would probably split the difference. He thought that the feeling of the landlords was that this opportunity of settling the land question should not be lost. He believed that if the Bill were passed into law, probably more than ninety out of every hundred landlords would sell under it. Speaking for himself, he would sell at once, although there might be a temptation to retain property which had been in his family for over 300 years. The Bill was an offer which neither the landlords nor the tenants should throw away. Personally, he was in favour of the 10 per cent. limit; and he did not think that raising it to 15 per cent. would confer any benefit on the tenants, while it would narrow the region of bargaining. He thought that the Irishman who would do anything to wreck this measure would deserve ill of his country.

MR. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour) said there was no question as to the security of the State so far as the alteration proposed by the Amendment was concerned; and therefore the objection of the hon. and gallant Gentleman disappeared. The Amendment should be considered entirely from the point of view of what was the smallest minimum of reduction which would meet all the difficulties that might arise. The Land Conference Report referred to the increased responsibility which would be placed on the tenant. There was every prospect of increased taxation; and the Land Conference had to consider what annual instalment the tenant should pay in future as compared with the rent he paid at present. The Conference came to the conclusion that 15 per cent. was the minimum reduction which the tenant should have. The question the Committee had now to consider was whether that was or was not a reasonable settlement. The proposal in the Report was universally agreed to. No objection was taken to it by the Landlords' Convention, which acknowledged the spirit of fairness of the Report, while declining to commit itself to all the details. He had never heard of any body in Ireland taking exception to the minimum reduction embodied in the Report. In future the tenant would not have assistance from his landlord, which was now given in many cases. He would not be allowed voluntary abatement. His rents would not be allowed to run into arrear; and the question which the Committee had to consider was, not in the average of cases but in extreme cases, what was the minimum of reduction the instalment should represent. Having regard to the fact that in future the tenant would stand entirely on his own basis, and that he would have a harsh and punctual landlord who had no heart, and who would be sure to extort the instalments to a day, the Land Conference came to the conclusion that the smallest figure they could reasonably recommend was 15 per cent. The landlords appeared quite as anxious that a figure should be fixed which would enable the tenant to meet his obligations. The Conference Report was adopted unanimously by the country, and he never heard any repudiation by any landlord body in Ireland of the 15 per cent. recommendation. He appealed to hon. Members, who during the last few days had been quoting the Land Conference Report against them, to at least support this proposal in the Report. So far as broadening the lines of bargaining was concerned, that could be very easily arranged by altering the other limit; but he maintained that, having regard to the obligations that would be imposed on the tenant and his difficulty in meeting them when he had made a hard and fast bargain with the State, the minimum reduction should be 15 per cent.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said if they took the Conference figures and inserted 15 per cent. they at least insured 15 per cent. coming to the tenants at once, and they gave him in exchange for this security the right to get 30 per cent. They were absolutely assured of 15 per cent. instead of 10 per cent., and had a chance of getting 30 instead of 25 per cent. on second-term rents. That was the Irish tenant's point of view, but he wished to point out that the 15 per cent which the tenant would secure under the minimum of his hon. and learned friend was also a security to the British taxpayer. Over 2,000 bargains had been refused by the Land Commissioners because the security was not sufficient. He thought it was hardly fair for hon. Members on the Unionist side of the House to throw the Land Conference Report at the head of both Irish Parties as they had done, and the moment it came up in a concrete shape and they proposed to accept the figures to say it was only to be taken when it was in favour of the landlords.

MR. EMMOTT (Oldham) said it might be that the lower the price which could be arranged in these transactions the better it would be for the taxpayer, but if this Bill was to be of any effect the price must be one which would induce the landlords to sell. They ought to see that the terms were as fair as possible for both sides, but were such as to induce the landlords to sell. Taking a 3¼ per cent. security, which was an infinitely better security than Irish land at the present time, the capitalised amount that would give the landlord the £90 out of every £100 that they asked for was £2,500 plus the bonus. That was 20 per cent. If the 15 per cent. figures were taken it would be about £2,650, so that £85 rent would mean a capital sum of £2,650, this would give £86, which with the 10 per cent. bonus would be £94 7s. Therefore, if they took the 10 per cent. figure, the landlord would get a trifle over the gross income to which he was now entitled.

MR. WYNDHAM regretted that he could not give way. The hon Member had urged his plea with great ingenuity and force. In reply, he would ask hon. Members who had made reference to the Land Conference Report to recollect the position in which the Government were placed by it. From many points of view it placed them in a most happy position, for it gave them an unexampled opportunity. But also from some points of view it put them in a very difficult position. It was laid down at that Conference that the landlord could not be expected to sell unless he received as the result of the transaction a sum which would secure to him his net income. Whether 10 per cent. was too liberal a calculation he was not competent to decide; but it must be taken that their intention was that the landlord who had received £100 should in future, after he had been paid and had invested his money, receive £90 a year. But the Land Conference went further, and laid it down that the State should bear the whole cost of investigation of title and distribution of purchase money. It was impossible for him to say what that would amount to, but in some cases he knew it had amounted to as much as two or three years purchase. The Government found themselves unable to give such liberal terms; and on all these occasions, he must be allowed to point out, the signatories of the Conference Report happily and properly did not assume the attitude of dictation to the general taxpayer or the Exchequer. If they had their Report would not have made nearly so great an impression on the public imagination. But they said what they thought would solve the situation, and suggested that if what was necessary could not be done by the use of State credit reasonable aid might be added. He had to go closely into this problem and to make an unusual and unprecedented demand on his colleagues. The sum which could properly be allotted had been determined, and he suggested that if the Government had come to a different view as to that amount and made a larger advance he would have had greater difficulty in commending the measure to the House as a whole. Having fixed the amount of aid the State should give at £12,000,000 they were then bound to carry out, as far as they could, the Conference terms in respect both of the landlord and tenant, and he thought they had got much nearer the Conference terms in relation to the tenant than in relation to the landlord. Taking the figures of the hon. Member for Oldham, and assuming that 3¼ per cent. could be got instead of 3 per cent.—although this question must be considered in connection with the increased facilities the Government had now given for investment—he maintained that the landlord could not get his 90 per cent., for nothing had been allowed in the calculations of the hon. Member for costs. If the Amendment were accepted the landlord would get two, three, or four years purchase less than he ought to get by the Conference terms. The pecuniary position of every landlord would vary in accordance with his financial obligations, and if perfect theoretic justice was to be done in every case it would be necessary to sit as a Court upon the private affairs of each party to the transaction. That was one of the reasons for adopting the principle of the zones, and allowing the parties interested to play between the 10 and the 30 per cent. in order that, according to their particular circumstances, they might approach as nearly as they could to the terms of the Conference Report. That being so, the Government from their point of view ought not say to the tenants, "You shall not pay the price you wish to pay" except up to the point which was considered necessary for the security of the

State. That point was found at a reduction of 10 per cent. on second-term rents, and the Government would be unnecessarily interfering with the bargaining if they made the reduction greater when they did not consider it need be greater for the security of the State. He therefore opposed the Amendment.

*MR. HEMPHILL (Tyrone, N.) said the Committee could not be controlled by the findings of the Land Conference. The responsibility of Members was to consider each Amendment on its merits as it came before them. If the difference between 10 per cent. and 15 per cent. was so inconsiderable as had been urged, why should not the poor men—the tenants—get the benefit of it rather than the comparatively rich men—the landlords? The fact that the existing Government was satisfied with the proposed reduction was no reason why the taxpayers should acquiesce. He certainly refused to pin his faith to the present Administration in the matter of the economy or security of the taxpayers. The duty of the Committee was to see that the security was ample. The figures quoted by the hon. Member for Oldham demonstrated that with the minimum reduction at 10 per cent. the purchase annuity might possibly exceed the second-term rents. With what face could the Committee pass a clause having such an effect as that? What security was there that the public purse would not be called upon to make good the deficiency? With the minimum reduction fixed at 10 per cent. there was no margin of security at all. He appealed to the Committee not to listen to the argument that, because of what was done at the Conference, and because the landlords insisted on receiving from gilt-edged securities as much money as they had obtained from the most uncertain and contingent of all incomes—that derived from Irish land, they should be blind to their first duty of seeing that the State was sufficiently protected against future loss.

MR. ASHTON (Bedfordshire, Luton) said that in view of the large amount to be advanced by the British taxpayer for the purpose of carrying out this scheme, the figures produced by the hon. Member for Oldham ought to give every English Member pause before refusing to vote for the Amendment. Those figures showed that with the 10 per cent. reduction the landowner would get as much money as the gross amount of his present rent, whereas everybody who knew anything about land was aware that before the real value could be ascertained large deductions had to be made. Therefore, looking at the matter from the point of view of the British taxpayer, the figures of the hon. Member for Oldham had convinced him that with the 10 per cent. reduction the security was not good enough. It was of enormous importance that the representatives of Ireland should be satisfied in this respect. But the Irish Party had declared, through their leader, that they would not be satisfied with 10 per cent. reduction, and he certainly was not prepared to support the Bill if the Irish Members were not to be satisfied with it. Unless the people of Ireland were satisfied the arrangements would not be worth the paper on which they were written. On these grounds he should support the Amendment.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB pointed out that the rents here dealt with had been fixed, not by the landlord, but by a judicial tribunal, by whom all the circumstances referred to by the hon. Member for Oldham had been taken into account. It had also to be remembered that, in addition to the rent, there were the tenants' improvements, and, in many cases, the tenants' houses to be added to the security.

*MR. TOMKINSON (Cheshire, Crewe) said that it appeared to him that both parties to this dispute were being so handsomely dealt with by the British taxpayer through the exploitation of the national credit, that either of them could well afford to give way on the question of the 5 per cent. A tenant of a £10 second-term rental holding would under the Bill first get a 10 per cent. reduction to £9, and then receive the whole of the twenty-five years purchase money, £225, at 3¼ per cent.—including sinking fund—making his annual payment £7 4s. instead of £10. The landlord, on the other hand, would get enough to yield him his present rent in a 3¼ per cent. investment. At the same time, as it was not a compulsory Bill, some inducements to sale must be held out, and he doubted if the tenants' representatives were wise in pressing for the reduction. If this question came to a division, as it was to the interest of the British taxpayer that no more should be paid than was absolutely necessary, he should vote for the Amendment.

Mr. COGHILL said that upon this question he intended to vote with the hon. Member who had moved this Amendment.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.) said he knew of hundreds of cases where, in the case of judicial rents fixed within the last three or four years, the landlords had had to give considerable abatements. He knew a case where a landlord had to give 16 per cent. abatement upon a rent which had been recently reduced. Second-term rents had recently been reduced by 6, 8, and 10 per cent., although in some cases the rents had been raised. The hon. and gallant Member for Yarmouth appeared to represent both the taxpayers of Yarmouth and the landlords of Ireland. They should not forget that after the passing of the Local Government Act Irish landlords were relieved of the payment of the Poor Rate and other local charges, but they were left some special charges for which they were still liable, but when the landlords took themselves bag and baggage out of Ireland those charges would have to be borne by the annuitants.

*Mr. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.) said he had an Amendment on the Paper increasing the minimum reduction, but after the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Waterford he considered that he would not be justified in moving the Amendment standing in his name. Only two years ago the Landlords Convention demanded that they should be protected so far as to be able to get an equivalent sum which would produce an amount equal to their present net income. That claim had been put forward again to-day on their behalf by the hon. and gallant Member for Yarmouth. The case of the Irish tenant farmer was identical with the case of the English taxpayer. Apart altogether from the absurd and unreasonable prices contained in the first clause of this Bill, in his opinion the landlords' case could be met, and they could be assured of their present net income if the minimum reduction moved by the hon. and learned Member for Waterford was accepted by the Government. There was another view of the question which had not been brought as yet before the Committee. The Chief Secretary, when he introduced this Bill, told them that he estimated the rental of the estates to be sold at about £4,000,000 per annum. It was estimated that one-third at least of the landlords' interest was mortgaged. Taking those figures as correct, there would be a sum of £40,000,000 as mortgages upon land in Ireland, and the interest upon that would be about 4½ or 5 per cent. Taken at 4½ per cent., it gave a sum of £1,800,000 per annum, as the sum paid by the landlords for interest on mortgages. Of course the cost of collection would have to be considered. At the Landlords Convention, Mr. Montgomery estimated the cost of collection at 12½ per cent., and that meant a sum of £500,000, and if they added that sum to the £1,800,000 interest, it gave a sum of £2,300,000, which they had to deduct from the gross rental of £4,000,000 in order to arrive at the net rental. These figures gave £1,700,000 as the net rental at present enjoyed by the Irish landlords. Looking at this from a landlord's standpoint, how was this sum of £1,700,000 to be secured to them without putting an unnecessary burden upon the tenant purchaser? It was proposed that twenty years purchase of the gross rental would not be an unfair price for the landlords to receive or for the tenants to pay, but if they took it at twenty years purchase the sum required amounted to £80,000,000. There was a bonus of £12,000,000 to be given to the landlords under the Act by the general taxpayer, and thus they got £92,000,000, which was to be made up under the Bill and paid to the landlords. The landlords must pay off their mortgages, and if they deducted from the £92,000,000 the existing mortgages of £40,000,000 that left them £52,000,000 for investment.

Under the Bill additional facilities were being conferred upon landlords and trustees for investing this money. The sphere of trustee investments was somewhat enlarged, and he had no doubt whatever when they came to consider the present state of the money market, the landlords would be able to invest this money at 3½ per cent. Three per cent. Corporation stocks were now being issued at a large discount, and under the extended sphere landlords would be easily able to obtain for their money 3½ per cent. The sum of £52,000,000 invested at 3½ per cent. would produce an annual income of £1,820,000 a year, or £120,000 more than the income at present enjoyed by the landlords. He would suggest that the amount of the bonus should not go according to the price of the estates or the gross rentals, but in proportion to the net income derivable from the several estates. The purchasing tenants, on the basis he had given, would pay twenty years purchase in order to secure to the landlords the income which they at present enjoyed. The argument put forward by the hon. and gallant Member for Great Yarmouth that it did not matter much to the tenant farmers of Ireland whether they paid ten or twelve years extra purchase so long as they got a reduction of their present rents was not correct. The Irish tenant farmers, as evidenced by their dealings under the Ashbourne Act, had shown themselves as shrewd business men as the farmers of any country in the world, and they would ponder over it before they undertook to pay a price which would place a burden round their necks if they purchased under this Act, and which would place them in a far worse position than their neighbours who had purchased under the Ashbourne Act. As one largely interested in the land question he could assure the Committee that if tenants could not buy in the future under the Ashbourne Act he would advise them to borrow money at 5 per cent. to pay the landlord rather than borrow from the Government under this Act.

He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would concede the small measure of justice asked for by the hon. and learned Member for Waterford. After all, 5 per cent. was not much. It would not break the back of the landlord or tenant even if the Government did not yield, but the acceptance of the Amendment would help to make the working of the Bill practicable. The result of rejecting the Amendment would be that the Bill, instead of facilitating the final settlement of this vexed question, would only be another milestone on the agrarian road in Ireland. He did not think the land question could ever be settled by a voluntary Bill. He believed there must be compulsory sale. Until they had compulsory sale, year after year the same story would be repeated in this House as had been told for the last century. This Bill, from that point of view, would never settle the land question. He urged the right hon. Gentleman to consider the wishes put forward practically unanimously by hon. Members from Ireland in favour of the instalment of justice asked for in the Amendment. Although Irish landlords might, in some cases, be unwilling to sell their estates, he believed they would be induced to do so if they were satisfied that this Bill would settle the question.

MR. DUFFY (Galway, S.) said that as one deeply interested in the acceptance of the Amendment, he wished to say a word in favour of it. He was acquainted with the conditions of the districts in County Galway, and he could not understand why some hon. Members had rushed to the conclusion that on the second-term rents the tenants had been granted a reduction of 20 per cent. Two or three years ago when the second-term rents were being fixed a wave of indignation ran over the districts at what was being done by the Sub-Commissioners. The tenantry at that time visited him and asked what they were to do in the circumstances in which they were placed. The landlords before going into Court offered second-term reductions varying from 20 to 25 per cent. On entering the Court the tenants in some cases not only did not get their rents reduced but had them increased. What possibility did that open up to the Irish Government in future? He pointed this out as a reason why the right hon. Gentleman should not take it into account to induce him to accept the Amendment now before the Committee. If the Amendment was passed hon. Members from Ireland would be able to point out to the tenants that there was a prospect of their getting a further reduction of 15 instead of 10 per cent. By retaining the minimum figure yesterday the Government committed a mistake and incorporated one of the greatest possible flaws in the measure. He hoped they would repent that mistake by accepting this Amendment.

MR. MURPHY (Kerry, E.) said the limit of 10 per cent. had been defended by the hon. and gallant Member for Great Yarmouth. He had in his mind a case which occurred last year on the Warden Estate in County Kerry. Mr. Warden was, he understood, connected with the hon. Member for Great Yarmouth. In that case the valuer gave evidence that the value of a holding was £7, but the Sub-Commissioners who might have been expected to stand fairly between the landlord and the tenant fixed the rent at £7 10s. In connection with the fixing of second-term rents the tenant often felt aggrieved at the decisions of the Sub-Commission. He impressed on the Chief Secretary that this Amendment had been supported by every Member who spoke for Ireland. In regard to a previous Amendment the right hon. Gentleman said that on account of the unanimity of opinion on the part of the Irish Members he would give way. He thought that in this matter he ought to do the same thing. By doing so he would ensure that the tenants would be protected and that the interest of the British taxpayer would also be safeguarded.

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.) said he represented a county in the West of Ireland which was deeply interested in the matter under discussion. He could not conceive why the Chief Secretary would not, in the face of what occurred last night, without the slightest hesitation accept the very moderate Amendment proposed by his hon. friend and leader the Member for Waterford. His county, although partially congested, was peculiarly an agricultural county, and the greater portion of it was occupied by farms of between £20 and £50 valuation. The question dealt with by the Amendment concerned them very much indeed, and it would be a grievous disappointment to all classes of farmers in the county if it were not accepted by the Chief Secretary. He would remind the right hon. Gentleman and the House that under the Ashbourne Act many estates had been purchased not only in County Kerry but all over the west of Ireland on the basis of sixteen and seventeen years purchase. These purchases were effected on the basis of seventeen years purchase on first-term rents and with decadal reductions. If the limitations, proposed in the clause, to agreements between landlord and tenant were insisted on it would create in his county the same discontent as in the case of the Dillon Estate. If the right hon. Gentleman rejected the Amendment he would leave the great body of the people in Ireland under the impression that the Government had no serious intention of passing this measure into law. Even if it were passed it would become inoperative. All those who had taken part in the agrarian agitation in Ireland during the past fifteen years were as anxious as any hon. or right hon. Gentleman in the House to bring the Irish agrarian war to an end, so that they could press on their case for social reforms, the industrial development of their country and the creation of a Parliament of their own. They were sincere in their wish to bring the agrarian war to a close in the interest of every class and religious section in the community; and he appealed to the right hon. Gentleman to accept this moderate Amendment and by so doing repair some of the damage he had done the previous night.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) said that on a matter of this kind first impressions counted for a very great deal, and if the idea was given to people who were anxious to enter into negotiations for the purchase of their holdings that they would only get a 10 per cent. reduction from what they were now paying, many of them would fight shy. The first question he was asked in the County of Clare was what reduction they could possibly get if they entered into arrangements under the Bill; and if the right hon. Gentleman put him in the position to say that only 10 per cent. was to be given a great many of them would hesitate and hold back. The last second term rents fixed had not been at all satisfactory, and therefore they expected a larger reduction. If the right hon. Gentleman enabled the Irish Members to go to their constituents and say that they would get a reduction of 15 per cent. on second-term rents straight away, it would greatly facilitate the progress of the Bill and induce people to take action on it. Hon. Gentlemen opposite might resist the Amendment on the ground that this was another attempt to extort terms that would not be fair to the landlords; but that was not his idea or that of his hon. friends. On former occasions he could hardly find words strong enough in which to describe the conduct of the landlords, but he recognised that a truce had been called on both sides, and that there was a sincere desire to come to a solution of the land question. They did not want to withhold from the landlords a fair and reasonable share in this bargain, but they also wanted the vast majority of the small farmers to take advantage of the provisions of this Bill when it passed into law, and to become the owners of their own soil. If the tenants did not get a reduction of 15 per cent., which was fair, they would say that they preferred to hold out to a future time when they would be able to get infinitely better terms than those now proposed in the Bill.

Question put.

Committee divided:—Ayes, 217; Noes, 175. (Division List No. 119.)

AYES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Aird, Sir John
Allhusen, Aug. Henry Eden
Allsopp, Hon. George
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Alfred
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (*Manch'r*
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bignold, Arthur
Bigwood, James
Bill, Charles
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bousfield, William Robert
Brassey, Albert
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Brown, Sir Alx. H. (*Shropsh.*)
Bull, William James
Butcher, John George
Campbell, Rt Hn J A (*Glasg.*)
Campbell, J. H. M. (*Dublin Univ*
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cavendish, V. C. W. (*Derbyshire*
Cayzer, Sir Charles William
Cecil, Evelyn (*Aston Manor*)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chamberlain, Rt Hon J (*Birm*
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Chapman, Edward
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Coddington, Sir William
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Collings, Right Hon. Jesse
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Colston, Chas. Edw H. Athole
Cox, Irwin Edward Bainbridge
Craig, Charles C. (*Antrim, S.*)
Cranborne, Viscount
Cripps, Charles Alfred
Cross, Alexander (*Glasgow*)
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Crossley, Sir Savile
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Denny, Colonel
Dewar, Sir T. R. (*Tr. Haml'ts*
Dickson, Charles Scott
Digby, John K. D. Wingfield-
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Dorington, Rt. Hon. Sir J. E.
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir William Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fergusson, Rt. Hon Sir J (*Man'r*)
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Firbank, Sir Joseph Thomas
Fisher, William Hayes
FitzGerald, Sir Robt. Penrose
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Galloway, William Johnson
Garfit, William
Gibbs, Hn. A. G. H. (*City of Lond.*
Gibbs, Hn. Vicary (*St. Albans*
Godson, Sir Augustus Frederick
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nrn*
Gore, Hon. G R C. Ormsby-(*Salop*
Gore, Hn. S. F. Ormsby- (*Linc*
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Greene, Sir E. W. (*Bury St. Ed.*
Groves, James Grimble
Gunter, Sir Robert
Halsey, Rt. Hon. Thomas F.
Hamilton, Rt Hn Lord G (*Midd'x*
Hamilton, Marq. of (*Londondy*
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Haslam, Sir Alfred S.
Hatch. Ernest Frederick Geo.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heaton, John Henniker
Helder, Augustus
Henderson. Sir Alexander
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Hornby, Sir William Henry
Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry
Hoult, Joseph
Howard, J. (*Midd., Tott'ham*
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Hutton, John (*Yorks, N.R.*)
Jebb, Sir Richard Claverhouse
Johnstone, Heywood
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir J. H.
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Kerr, John
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Lawson, John Grant (*Yorks. NR*
Lees, Sir Elliott (*Birkenhead*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Llewellyn, Evan Henry
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long, Col. Chas. W. (*Evesham*
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (*Bristol, S.*
Lowe, Francis William
Loyd, Archie Kirkman
Macdona, John Cumming
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
M'Iver, Sir Lewis (*Edinb'rgh W*
Malcolm, Ian
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Maxwell, Rt Hn Sir H. E (*Wigt'n*
Melville, Beresford Valentine
Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
Milvain, Thomas
Mitchell, William (*Burnley*)
Montagu, G. (*Huntingdon*)
Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
More, Robt. Jasper (*Shropshire*
Morgan, Hn. F. (*Monm'thsh.*)
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Mowbray, Sir Robt. Gray C.
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Murray, Charles J. (*Coventry*)
Myers, William Henry
Newdegate, Francis A. N.
Nicholson, William Graham
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Parker, Sir Gilbert
Peel, Hn. Wm. R. Wellesley
Pemberton, John S. G.
Percy, Earl

Pilkington, Lt.-Col. Richard
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Plummer, Walter R.
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pym, C. Guy
Quilter, Sir Cuthbert
Randles, John S.
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Rattigan, Sir William Henry
Reid, James (*Greenock*)
Renwick, George
Ridley, S. F. (*Bethnal Green*)
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Rutherford, John (*Lancashire*)
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Sadler, Col. Saml. Alexander
Samuel, Harry S. (*Limehouse*)
Sandys, Lt.-Col. Thos. Myles
Saunderson, Rt. Hn. Col. E. J.
Seely, Maj. J E B. (*Isle of Wight*
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*)
Sinclair, Louis (*Romford*)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Smith, Abel H. (*Hertford, E.*)
Smith, H. C(*North'mb. Tyneside*
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Stanley, Edw. Jas. (*Somerset*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stewart, Sir Mark J. M‘Taggart
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Stroyan, John
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Talbot, Rt Hn J. G. (*Oxf'd Univ.*
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Thorburn, Sir Walter
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw. M.
Tritton, Charles Ernest
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Vincent Col. Sir C. E H. *Sheffi'd*
Wanklyn, James Leslie
Warde, Colonel C. E.
Wharton, Rt. Hon. J. Lloyd
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Willox, Sir John Archibald
Wilson, John (*Glasgow*)
Wilson, J. W. (*Worcestersh., N*)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E R. (*Bath*
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Worsley-Taylor, Hry. Wilson
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Yerburgh, Robt. Armstrong

TELLERS FOR THE AYES — Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Abraham, William (*Cork N. E.*)
Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Allen, Chas. P. (*Glos., Stroud*)
Ambrose, Robert
Asher, Alexander
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Austin, Sir John
Barlow, John Emmott
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (*Cork, S.*)
Bayley, Thomas (*Derbyshire*)
Black, Alexander William
Blake, Edward
Boland, John
Brand, Hon. Arthur G.
Broadhurst, Henry
Bryce, Right Hon. James
Burke, E. Haviland
Burns, John
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Campbell, John (*Armagh, S.*)
Carew, James Laurence
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Causton, Richard Knight
Channing, Francis Allston
Clancy, John Joseph
Cogan, Denis J.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*)
Crean, Eugene
Crombie, John William
Crooks, William
Cullinan, J.
Delany, William
Devlin, Chas. Ramsay (*Galway*
Dewar, John A. (*Inverness-sh.*)
Dillon, John
Doogan, P. C.
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, J. Hastings
Dunn, Sir William
Edwards, Frank
Emmott, Alfred
Evans, Saml. T. (*Glamorgan*)
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (*Leith*
Ffrench, Peter
Field, William
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Flynn, James Christopher
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Fuller, J. M. F.
Gilhooly, James
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert J.
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Grant, Corrie
Grey, Rt. Hn. Sir E. (*Berwick*
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Hammond, John
Hardie, J. Keir (*Merthyr Tyd*
Harrington, Timothy
Hayden, John Patrick
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Healy, Timothy Michael
Hemphill, Rt. Hon. Chas H.
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (*Bristol, E.*
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Jacoby, James Alfred
Jameson, Major J. Eustace
Joicey, Sir James
Jones, David B. (*Swansea*)
Jordan, Jeremiah
Joyce, Michael
Kennedy, Patrick James
Kilbride, Denis
Kitson, Sir James
Labouchere, Henry
Lambert, George
Law, H. Alex. (*Donegal, W*)
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (*Cornwall*
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leamy, Edmund
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (*Accrington*)
Leigh, Sir Joseph
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
MacDonnell, Dr. Mark A.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
M‘Govern, T.
M‘Killop, W. (*Sligo, North*)
Mappin, Sir Fredk. Thorpe
Markham, Arthur Basil
Mitchell, Edw. (*Fermanagh, N.*
Mooney, John J.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (*Carmarthen*
Murnaghan, George
Murphy, John
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nolan, Col. John P. (*Galway, N*
Nolan, Joseph (*Louth, S.*)
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, James F. X. (*Cork*
O'Brien, K. (*Tipperary, Mid*)
O'Brien, Patrick (*Kilkenny*)
O'Brien, P. J. *Tipperary, N.*)
O'Brien, William (*Cork*)
O'Connor, Jas. (*Wicklow, W.*)
O'Connor, T. P. (*Liverpool*)
O'Doherty, William
O'Donnell, John (*Mayo, S.*)
O'Donnell, T. (*Kerry, W.*)
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, Conor (*Mayo, N.*)
O'Kelly, J. (*Roscommon, N.*)
O'Malley, William
O'Mara, James
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
O'Shee, James John
Palmer, Sir C. M. (*Durham*)
Paulton, James Mellor
Philipps, John Wynford
Pirie, Duncan V.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, Robert John
Rea, Russell
Reddy, M.
Redmond, Jn. E. (*Waterford*)
Redmond, William (*Clare*)
Reid, Sir R. Threshie (*Dumfries*)
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)

Robson, William Snowdon
Roche, John
Roe, Sir Thomas
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (*Cleveland*)
Schwann, Charles E.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Thomas (*Hawick, B.*)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Soares, Ernest J.
Sullivan, Donal
Taylor, Theo. C. (*Radcliffe*)
Thomas, David Alfred (*Merthyr*
Thomas, J. A. (*Glam., Gower*)
Thompson, Dr E C (*Monagh'n, N*
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Tully, Jasper
Wallace, Robert
Walton, Joseph (*Barnsley*)
Wason, John Cathcart (*Orkney*
White, Patrick (*Meath, N.*)
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Wilson, H. J. (*York, W. R.*)
Wilson, John (*Durham, Mid*)
Young, Samuel
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES — Sir Thomas Esmonde and Captain Donelan.

MR. JOHN REDMOND asked whether the next Amendment standing in his name would be in order?

*THE CHAIRMAN: No. I do not think it would. I think it would cover the same ground as was taken yesterday, but it would be in order to move to omit "thirty" and insert "forty."

MR. JOHN REDMOND said he would accordingly propose to omit "thirty" and insert "forty." After what had taken place the previous day, every one knew that they had endeavoured to put before the Committee in the most forcible manner their opposition to this maximum reduction limit. For the present the Government were obdurate in this matter, and although he hoped before the Bill left the House they would change their minds, he thought the best thing they could do was to improve the limitation. No object would be gained by repeating the arguments already put before the Committee, and he therefore contented himself by simply moving the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 24, to leave out the word 'thirty' and insert the word 'forty.'"—(*Mr. John Redmond.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'thirty' stand part of the clause."

MR. WYNDHAM was unable to accept the Amendment. He agreed that the matter had already been discussed at great length, but if hon. Gentlemen opposite thought he ought to add something he was prepared to do so.

MR. JOHN REDMOND directed the right hon. gentleman's attention to the point of the modification of the figures.

MR. WYNDHAM said he would confine his attention to that point, although other points would be raised by subsequent Amendments. In order to justify the figure thirty he would take up the argument which he had with the hon. Member for Oldham on an earlier Amendment. A reduction of 30 per cent. would mean £70 instead of £100, and that would produce a capital sum from the tenant of £2,154. But he ought to add something for the bonus. How much should be added it was impossible to say, but he would add 10 per cent., and then the landlord, from the tenant and the State, would receive in all £2,369. In order to get the terms which the Conference desired the landlord to get, and the terms which would induce landlords to sell, he would have to invest that sum, not at 3 per cent. or 3¼ per cent., but at more than 3¾ per cent., and he thought he should be going very far away from the Conference terms, and further than he ought to go, if he did not attempt to prevent the landlord's future income falling, as it would, below £77 instead of £90. Waiving altogether the question that the Conference proposed to pay the 10 per cent. bonus for the investigation of title, if the tenants got a reduction of 30 per cent. and the landlord invested the money at 3¼ per cent. he would only get £77 instead of £90 as proposed by the Conference. He felt bound as far as he could to carry out the spirit of that Report and to consider the rights of both parties. In this case the tenant would be getting 5 per cent. more than he would get under the Conference terms, and there would be a prospect of further reductions. They had tried to do justice in this matter between the two parties, but that was not his main defence for keeping the figures as they appeared in the Bill. His main defence of those zones was that if they abandoned them, or even altered them materially, they would inevitably go back to the procedure of the Landed

Estates Court. Even if the Amendment were to be carried, when they came to work the Bill did anyone suppose that the great English Societies, who had large sums of money invested in Irish land, and who knew nothing of the system of land tenure in Ireland, would not, on hearing that their property was jeopardised, move for an injunction to restrain the sale of properties at a figure which would imperil their securities. The hon. Member for Waterford was not convinced on that point, but if necessary he could be furnished with full details, facts and figures. He had found, contrary to his expectations, that this Bill had caused a great deal of commotion and apprehension throughout the ranks of those who had interests in Irish land other than those of the landlord. The Irish Church body alone had £8,000,000 of money invested in mortgages in Ireland. If he took away this safeguard of the interests of those who had mortgages in Irish land some others would be found, and these might so delay and impede the sales as to defeat the object of the Bill. It had been asserted that in this matter the Government were mainly concerned in seeing that the landlords got a certain price. He had never denied that, in his opinion, they were bound to see that to a certain extent the terms of the Conference were carried out. But he had contended that the landlord would not get as much as the tenant. Behind all that stood these legal difficulties and the dangers of delay. They could be best met by statutory enactment, and they must be met if they wished to avoid great disappointment in Ireland and elsewhere.

MR. T. M. HEALY said he desired to recall to the Committee the fact that in 1896 when the Bill was going through the House he moved an Amendment to give the mortgagees and encumbrancers the power to sell in the Land Court. That Amendment was opposed by the Government and rejected. The Government having refused to take the advice offered in 1896, which would have got rid of the whole difficulty, now turned round and told the Committee that the mortgagees and encumbrancers were the chief reason why the zone system was invented. It was foolish to be wise before their time. They were too wise in 1896 and were then scoffed at; they were told it would not be right to give a mortgagee power to sell the landlord out of his house and home, although the landlord, as they now knew from the right hon. Gentleman, was in many cases in the Westport Union. He had never taken up the position that some defence could not be made in respect of the zone system, and his friends in the Conference would not have come to the conclusion that there might be a zone system had they not had some reason for it. He acknowledged that in the Bill as drawn there must be some system; they might have some system of notice by which the mortgagee could come in and the whole question of priority of charge settled when they were selling what might be a bankrupt estate, a system which would involve a long procedure; or they might have a zone system. They debated that question on the previous day and decided it, and to-day they were not dealing so much with the zone system but what the limits of the zone ought to be.

Accepting the proposition of the zone system, and leaving the mortgagees and encumbrancers out of the case, he desired to ask why the right hon. Gentleman had given no answer to the question why the unencumbered land had required a zone system. The right hon. Gentleman had given no reply to that; he would give it himself. The reply was "Trinity College, Dublin." The case of the Irish Church body was an entirely different case because the Irish Church body was a genuine encumbrancer. That was not the case of Trinity College at all. The middleman in Trinity College was the owner of the fee simple, and, having been created the fee simple owner, Trinity College was in the position that it was not an encumbrancer and it was not the head landlord. It was in the position of a quasi-charger. Trinity College was in an unusual position in the eye of the law, and when he asked why was not the owner of the fee simple allowed to do what he liked he received no reply. For the sake of Trinity College, an undisclosed principal, the whole independence of the landlord was to be fettered. Let them put Trinity College in a separate and distinct category. It occupied a position abhorrent to the real principles of law; it was a creature of special Acts of Parliament with a special status given to it. Let them exempt it not from the

Bill, but from the operation of this system of zones, and deal with it under some special and separate clause. The result would be that the two guardian angels of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary might fairly lead the House and not be embarrassing the Government at every turn, and they would be able to discuss Trinity College in a separate clause. If that suggestion met the view of Irish Members it might be the means of creating some freedom for the Government and the landlords and tenants of Ireland with regard to the rest of the Bill. At the present moment they were discussing the zone not as an Irish zone in truth but as a zone governed and fettered by the position of Trinity College. He wished Irish landlords in this matter would form a special group among themselves to speak in this House upon this matter, in which case the Government would be much less fettered. The Irish landlords were advising the Government from what they believed to be the point of view of their own interests, but the more he contemplated the action of the Government the less he was satisfied that the interests of the landlords were best advocated in this. The interests of the landlords did not conflict in this Bill, and therefore it was that they could approach this matter better from the position of judicious bottle-holders than as partisans. The Government should ask the landlords whether they were in the position of an Œcumenical Council giving infallible advice in this matter.

MR. DILLON said this Amendment raised a most important question. The right hon. Gentleman put forward the appeal that he was in a measure bound to maintain the income of the landlords at the net return of the second-term rentals and not allow any freedom of bargaining which would reduce them below that level. That introduced the question of the basis on which the income was to be estimated. Under the provisions of the Bill, it would be easy for landlords to invest the proceeds of the sale of their estates at certainly 3¾ per cent., so that the estimate of the Chief Secretary was entirely wrong. That made a considerable difference in the question of the net income. Then speakers on the other side had altogether ignored the payments to mortgagees. The normal condition of landlords in Ireland was that their estates were mortgaged to at least one-third of their value, and many of them to the extent of two-thirds. The truth of the matter was that it would not be under the mark to say that the landlords would be able to invest their proceeds at an average of 4 per cent.; and it was absurd to carry on the argument on the assumption that the landlords were really compelled, in order to get their present net income, to invest the proceeds of their estates at 3¼ per cent. In many cases, instead of suffering a reduction of net income, the landlords, in addition to exchanging an absolutely rotten security for a gilt-edged security, would considerably increase their net income. What English or Scotch Member was there who, if dependent on an income from land, would not, in the present condition of agriculture, gladly exchange that income at a considerable net loss for an income from a gilt-edged security? The argument of the Chief Secretary on that point absolutely fell to the ground.

Then the right hon. Gentleman had referred to the old question of legal delay, and urged the necessity, unless there was a statutory enactment, of giving notice to all the interests concerned. But why should the statutory enactment take the particular form proposed in Clause 1? Moreover, that was no argument against extending this limit, because, even if it were increased to 40, or 50, or 60 per cent., the statutory enactment would still remain. The question of legal delay had been grossly exaggerated. The delay in the Landed Estates Court, of which the right hon. Gentleman had drawn appalling pictures, was largely due to the fact that the Court had been perverted, he believed illegally, from the purpose for which it was established, into a rent-collecting machine, a nursery for bankrupt estates, and a means of preventing rather than expediting sales. It was really monstrous to quote the Landed Estates Court as an example of what might occur. Had the right hon. Gentleman ever read the history of the Encumbered Estates Court, the parent of the Landed Estates Court? In those days, when the fate of the old gentry of Ireland—many of whom, bad as they were, were better than those who had come after them—was at stake, none of this tenderness was shown, nor were the net incomes so carefully nursed. The transactions were executed with a rapidity that would make real property lawyers in England go into fits. The estates were sold at knock-out auction in Court for ten, eight, or even seven years purchase, without the slightest consideration for the interests of the owner or the encumbered person. There was no reality in this talk about legal delay. The machine could easily be made to move if so desired. All that was wanted were officials who really desired to get the work done, and not officials whose one object was to prevent the work being done for fear of it being found that their salaries were unnecessary. But the question of legal delay did not arise on this Amendment, which was simply a question of giving a little more elbow-room to the bargainers. How was it that the Ashbourne Act had worked so well if this enormous difficulty existed? For ten or twelve years that Act worked admirably, and it would have worked better if the members of the Land Commission had stuck to their work instead of wandering over Europe inspecting stud farms in Germany, or receiving the King at Hackney Substantially the old machinery worked well, and all that was necessary to make it work more rapidly was a clearance of the old officials, the introduction of fresh blood, a sufficient number of men to do the work of minor officials—such as inspection and detail work—and some inducement to the landlords additional to the prices which the tenants had been willing or able to offer in the past. The Irish party still held that compulsion was the proper course. In the face of what had occurred, however, he was content to try the experiment of offering to the landlords three or four years purchase more than they had been in the habit of receiving, and then putting a limit to the period during which that offer should hold good. If that system gave a prospect of settling the question so much the better; but if it failed the cry for compulsion would be irresistible. That system, he contended, could get a perfectly fair trial under the old machinery. For his part he could only say that even if the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Waterford were accepted, he should still feel bound, so long as this limit to the maximum reduction remained, to oppose the whole clause.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.) said the hon. Member who had just sat down had expressed for the first time thorough approval of the existing system under the Ashbourne Act. Hardly a day went past in which his right hon. friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland was not asked questions as to how it was that such and such a purchase had not been carried out, what had been the meaning of the delay, and whether nothing could be done to stir up the Land Commission. The Conference Report stated that one of the main conditions of success in reference to any land purchase scheme must be its prompt application, and the avoidance of investigations and delays which had hitherto taken place in all the legislative proposals for settling the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland. There were one or two matters which had been left out of consideration. The hon. Member opposite had urged the lowering of the minimum price. They should, however, remember that they had got to deal with a number of landlords who could not afford to sell at a low price. There was no practical use in fixing a minimum of 40 or 50 per cent. below the rent, because then the choice would only be either to accept those terms with beggary or stay on and take their chance. His right hon. friend the Chief Secretary had asked him to endeavour to assist the Committee to come to a correct appreciation of the delays which it was sought to avoid by the money limit in the Bill. There were, of course, the delays necessarily incident to the ordinary procedure of the Landed Estates Court. They had to ascertain every encumbrance, fix the extent of every tenant's holding, ascertain the rights *inter se* of all the tenants, and every easement. It was necessary that the utmost care should be taken, and he was certain that formerly no estate was ever brought to sale in the Landed Estates Court within one or two years from the date when the petition was filed. For the first time in the history of the world they were enabling a man by this Bill, who might only have an interest for £60 a year in his property, to sell without anybody's consent or concurrence, and behind everybody's back, to the tenantry, property of which he might only hold a very small part. It was a great invasion of the right of private property as generally understood. If a Bill were passed enabling his hon. friend's neighbour to sell him out without consulting him at all, surely it would not be sufficient to be assured that he was not a "scallywag" but that he was an honourable man. Without asking anybody's consent this man might sell a property of which he did not own one-thousandth part. If they did not want robbery to take place they must give effect to these powers.

In order to maintain the interest of the tenant, the landlord, the Government, society, and the public peace and contentment of the country, it was absolutely necessary to diminish as much as possible the interval before a sale could be concluded. The ordinary legal protection was both costly and cumbrous, and the best way would be to bring every person interested before the Court. They should bring everybody whose property they were disposing of before the Court in order to ascertain whether they consented or not to the proposed sale. There was scarcely a single estate in Ireland in which that process would not involve the consideration of a couple of marriage settlements, and probably one or two wills. He would take as an example the case of a man who settled his estate upon his son. The tenant for life exercised power of appointment and appointed his second son. Therefore the tenant for life, the eldest son, and the second son were the only two persons interested. Afterwards one of the other children might come in and declare that the appointment of the brother was fraudulent because his father gained some pecuniary interest by it, and he might claim that the estate belonged to the three of them. There was scarcely a question which could be raised in a Court of law which was more difficult than to decide when an appointment was void from corrupt influence. That was why this tribunal was absolutely incompetent to deal with such a question of law, which must under those circumstances necessarily be transferred to some legal tribunal. Speaking from practical knowledge of the mode of procedure, he had no hesitation in saying that it would be absolutely impossible to get the consent of all the parties interested in a less interval than one or two years. Take another case. A lady might have an interest of £5,000 in an estate, but to sell at this low figure she would only get £2,000. When they came to look for her they might discover that she had gone to India. The first thing they had to do was to appoint a new trustee, and he had seen cases of that kind take five years. If they could not have that steady and safe protection they must have some pecuniary protection.

MR. HEMPHILL said that condition also arose in the distribution of the purchase money under the Ashbourne Act.

MR. ATKINSON said that if it was proposed there should be a sale they had to ascertain whether the parties interested would consent, and therefore there must be a preliminary examination. Did his hon. friend mean to say that there had not been delays of one or two years under the Ashbourne Act? They must have some kind of protection, and it was obvious that if there was to be protection at all it could not be an extremely low figure. He should say that to lower the limit below the rent was no protection at all, because a part owner might sacrifice everybody by such a limit. There must be a money limit, which would be a fair and adequate substitute either for the care, caution, and supervision of the trustee whom they got rid of, or the protection given by the Landed Estates Court. There must be an adequate limit in order to facilitate the proceedings with respect to sale and purchase.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) said that one of the charms of this Assembly was that they were liable to get a lecture by a competent expert on almost any subject under Heaven. If the hon. Gentleman the Member for London University had an opportunity he was sure that he could charm the House by a lecture on bacteriology. That lecture would be quite as relevant to the particular Amendment with which the Committee were now dealing as the lecture of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney-General for Ireland. He yielded to no man in his admiration of the lucidity with which the right hon. Gentleman managed to thread his way through the labyrinth of legal subtleties. He really regretted that he was not a member of the Bar, and better able to appreciate the lecture, but, still, its natural charm and literary flavour appealed even to a man who was not a barrister. But he was an old Parliamentarian, and what the lecture had to do with the matter before the Committee he did not understand. The right hon. Gentleman had said that if this Amendment were carried it would bring in the Landed Estates Court, and the Chief Secretary had practically made use of the same argument. It was said that the result would be that they would have all the delay of the Landed Estates Court. He could not understand why both of these right hon. Gentlemen did not see how that argument bore against their own position. Assuming that a mortgagee thought he was going to be wronged by the price to be paid for the land, what was his remedy? He understood the Attorney-General to suggest that, in order to save himself from wrong, he must proceed to the Landed Estates Court. That was the very last thing he would think of doing if he were a sane man, because he knew that the right hon: Gentleman, or some other member of the legal profession, would get a great deal of the money that ought to go to the mortgagee; and therefore the whole force of the Attorney-General's argument would mean that the mortgagee would be an unmitigated fool if he went into the Landed Estates Court to deal with this matter. The Attorney-General had employed all his skill as an advocate to throw dust in the eyes of the Committee. If the remainder man or the mortgagee were to be put under those perils, let the Attorney-General raise them on the Amendment of which the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth had given notice. The Amendment raised in a substantial and definite form the danger to the mortgagee and the remainder man, and if the right hon. Gentleman thought those dangers to be as real as the Member for Plymouth believed, there was no reason why he should not support the Amendment. He did not himself see why if the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth was able to make out a case, the Nationalist Members should not support his Amendment. It raised the question in a proper shape, because the only proper protection was by giving the right of appeal. If they imagined that they were being unfairly dealt with that was their remedy, but the remedy of the Attorney-General was that the tenant should be compelled to pay two or three more years purchase of the land than he was entitled to pay.

Mr. ATKINSON: He has not the opportunity of appeal. The land will probably be sold before he knows anything about it.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR said the property would be sold but the money would not be disposed of. This was an argument in favour of the "scallywag" landlord. The Nationalist Members had used some strong language on these benches with regard to landlords, but they had never erected the "scallywag" landlord into a main factor in the settlement of the Irish land question, as had been done by the Attorney-General. The right hon. Gentleman had brought forward the subtleties of his profession, and used his trained advocate's tongue to try to induce the House to think that the real question at issue was not whether the tenants should be compelled to pay more money than they ought to do, but that there would be these extraordinary difficulties in the way of the settlement of the question if the Committee accepted the Amendment. When he heard the right hon. Gentleman talk he almost thought that there had never been land purchase in Ireland. If the right hon. Gentleman believed in the almost metaphysical impossibilities of selling land in Ireland he could tell him that many of the landlords did not share his views. Many of them thought that this insistence upon these zones would in the end turn out to the prejudice of the landlord and not to their benefit in some cases at least. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to be determined to artificially fix both the minimum and the average price of land in Ireland at four or five years purchase beyond what had ever been given for it before. Such an extraordinary proposition would have been incredible had not the Attorney-General tried to defend it. It was an attempt on the part of the right hon. and learned Gentleman to darken the councils of the House by legal subtleties.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said he regretted with the hon. Member for Scotland Division of Liverpool what he called the lecture of the right hon. and learned Attorney-General. When the Bill was being read a second time the right hon. Gentleman was pressed to account for these zones, and the only explanation he had to offer for the maximum reduction was that it was placed there to prevent the coercion of the landlords by the tenants. They had been diligently trying ever since the Bill was printed to find out the real defence of the maximum price, and they had only discovered it that night.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will the hon. Member tell the Committee why there were zones put into the Land Conference Report?

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said that they were not dealing now with the principle of zones, but with the maximum reduction within the zones. His right hon. and learned friend had given the Committee for the first time the intelligent and real reason for the maximum reduction of the price which the tenant was to pay; and he was grateful for it, because some of them would now be able to tell their own people why it had been done. Why should the Front Bench mix up the Land Judge's Court and the Landed Estates Court as if they were one and the same thing? Almost every day questions were asked about the delay in selling this, that, and the other estate in every part of Ireland. Where did the delay take place? Not in the Land Commission, but mainly in the Irish Land Judge's Court. Motion after Motion had been made in the House in regard to these delays, but they had never had the support of the Attorney-General to try and obviate the notorious delays in the Land Judge's Court. In fact that Court had ceased to be a Court, and had become a great rent-collecting machine for bankrupt Irish landlords. As he understood the Attorney-General, the real reason for the maximum reduction was that under the previous Purchase Acts numerous inquiries were indispensable before a sale could be effected. All sorts of legal difficulties arose, and unless these were settled the limited owner could not sell. The learned Attorney-General had not answered the question of the hon. and learned Member for Louth as to unencumbered estates where there was no limited owner to arrest a sale. Because of these delays, vexatious and absurd, it was impossible to adopt the machinery of the Land Purchase Acts in this Bill. The system adopted in this Bill was much speedier, more drastic, more thorough; and it was because that had been done, and because the limited owner had been enabled to sell, therefore, the tenant who bought must pay for this easing of the machine. The conclusion to which the hon. Member for Scotland Division had arrived was irresistible. He did not say that the limited owner ought to be allowed to sell, if he had only a very small interest, over the heads of the other parties concerned; but then the remedy for that was not to tax the tenant but clearly to allow bargains to be made outside these limits subject to the decision of the Estates Commission as to the position of the remainder man. When the full effect of that part of the Bill was known it would be scouted in Ireland.

MR. T. M. HEALY said he was most anxious to get an answer from the right hon. the Attorney-General to his question; and he was also very anxious that they should know, what nobody now knew, who the gentlemen were belonging to the Land Conference who approved of the zones. Surely a great historic matter like that should be made known to the Irish people. There must have been some reason in the mind of these strong advocates of zones. He was prepared to make a statement in reference to the services of these gentlemen to the Irish cause. Nobody more readily recognised these services than he did. But the general Irish public remained in the dark as to the inventor or inventors of these zones and as to the reason for them. He always felt as if he had one hand tied behind his back in discussing this question, because the people who invented these zones were the strongest on the tenants' side. Where was the answer from the Irish Attorney-General? That right hon. and learned Gentleman was at all events paid for answering questions. He acknowledged the very powerful and luminous speech the Attorney-General had made, so far as one portion of the case was concerned. He admitted the tremendous force of the right hon. Gentleman's argument, and he could see no answer to a large portion of it. But, on the other hand, the right hon. Gentleman had left a portion of his inquiry unanswered. He had given a reason for the protection of the remainder man, of the chargeants under a settlement when a person was allowed to sell an estate in which he had only an interest to the extent of, say, a quarter or less. The right hon. Gentleman had given a reason which was, from a lawyer's point of view, sufficient; but he had given no reason whatever why an unencumbered owner—and it must be assumed that there were some unencumbered estates in Ireland—should not be allowed to sell.

There were large unencumbered estates—those of the great London Companies—in the right hon. Gentleman's own country. When he himself fixed seventeen years purchase for the sale of the Drapers Company's estate, in the county of Derry, on the tenants' side, the Land Commission thought the price too high in a number of cases. The Mercers Company and the Drapers Company, two of the richest corporations in the world, had large estates in the county of Derry and in the right hon. Gentleman's own constituency. These estates had been acquired practically by conquest. He wanted to know why the Mercers Company, if they wanted to realise their property of a morning and pack off to London to invest the proceeds there, were fettered and compelled to sell at the price in this Bill? The Mercers Company had no maiden aunts. They had not made a will appointing a charge of £40,000 on their property to a younger son. They had made no deeds or had done nothing in any way to affect the ownership of their property; but so far as this Bill was concerned the estate of the Mercers Company, and every other unencumbered estate in Ireland, was as much bound to insist on getting this high price as a man with the most complicated encumbered estate in Ireland. Was that reasonable? No. The answer was, it was the case of Trinity College and their legal rights. The right hon. Gentleman dared not open his lips on that point, for if he did, his own colleague, the Solicitor-General, would rise up in revolution against him. He had no doubt there were many long anxious colloquies behind Mr. Speaker's Chair. They had seen them returning to the House, now with glowering looks, now with hopeful visages, apparently as the fate of the question of the minimum price went up and down in the counsels of the Government. He maintained that Trinity College occupied a legal position, the like of which did not exist on sea or land in any other country on the civilised globe. Because its case, as he understood it—and he did not pretend to understand very much about it—was that the middleman under Trinity College had been created by law the owner of the fee simple, and, therefore, in legal language, giving the unencumbered fee-simple owner the right to sell his estate outside these zones was to the prejudice of Trinity College, because Trinity College was, by some curious decision, above the feesimple owner as chargeant. Was that not the case? He saw that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor-General did not dissent from that statement.

SIR EDWARD CARSON (Dublin University): The hon. and learned Gentleman is misrepresenting me to this extent, that he has not stated that, as the result of the Purchase Acts, Trinity College property would be sold compulsorily, without their having any voice whatsoever in the sale, and at a price which would be fixed by the Land Commission, and not by any bargain which Trinity College made at all. All I say with regard to myself is that I ever attempted and will, to the best of my ability, attempt to protect Trinity College, which has sent me here.

MR. T. M. HEALY said that now the murder was out. He agreed that was the position, and yet that anomalous position of Trinity College was to be allowed to prejudice the case of all unencumbered landlords throughout the length and breadth of the country. He did not blame the Solicitors General for either England or Ireland for being loyal sons of their *alma mater*; but he held that Trinity College ought to be dealt with in a special category. He also recognised that it was the most natural thing for a draftsman, when drafting a Bill, to do so in the most condensed and workmanlike way possible; but let the Chief Secretary entrust to the Solicitors-General for England and Ireland respectively the drafting of a clause which would compel those who were selling Trinity College land to give notice to the College and see that it obtained a fair price.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 214; Noes, 156. (Division List No. 120.)

AYES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Allhusen, Aug. Henry Eden
Allsopp, Hon. George
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Baldwin, Alfred
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Man'r*
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bignold, Arthur
Bill, Charles
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon St. John
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Brown, Sir Alx. H. (*Shropsh.*)
Bull, William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, John George
Campbell, Rt Hn J A (*Glasg.*)
Campbell, J. H. M (*Dublin Univ*
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H
Cautley, Henry Strother
Cavendish, V C W (*Derbysh.*)
Cayzer, Sir Charles William
Cecil, Evelyn (*Aston Manor*)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. J. (*Birm*
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Chapman, Edward
Charrington, Spencer
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Collings, Right Hon. Jesse
Colomb, Sir John Charles Ready
Colston, Chas. Edw H. Athole
Cox, Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Cranborne, Viscount
Cross, Alexander (*Glasgow*)
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Crossley, Sir Savile
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Dewar, Sir T. R. (*Tr. Haml'ts*
Dickson, Charles Scott
Digby, John K. D. Wingfield-
Dorington, Rt. Hon. Sir John E.
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Firbank, Sir Joseph Thomas
Fisher, William Hayes
FitzGerald, Sir Robert Penrose
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Fyler, John Arthur
Galloway, William Johnson
Garfit, William
Gibbs, Hn. A. G. H (*City of Lond.*
Godson, Sir Augustus Frederick
Gore, Hn G R C. Ormsby- (*Salop*)
Gore, Hon. S. F. Ormsby- (*Linc.*
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Greene, Sir E. W. (*Bury St. Ed.*
Groves, James Grimble
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gunter, Sir Robert
Hall, Edward Marshall
Halsey, Rt. Hon. Thomas F.
Hamilton, Rt Hn Lord G (*Midd'x*
Hamilton Marq. of (*Londond'y*
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Haslam, Sir Alfred S.
Hatch, Ernest Frederick G.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helder, Augustus
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Hornby, Sir William Henry
Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry
Hoult, Joseph
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Hutton, John (*Yorks, N.R.*)
Jebb, Sir Richard Claverhouse
Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir J. H.
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*)
Kerr, John
Keswick, William
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*)
Lawson, John Grant (*Yorks. NR*
Lees, Sir Elliott (*Birkenhead*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Llewellyn, Evan Henry
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long, Col. Chas. W. (*Evesham*
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (*Bristol, S.*
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Francis William
Loyd, Archie Kirkman
Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
Majendie, James A. H.
Malcolm, Ian
Maxwell, Rt Hn Sir H. E (*Wigt'n*
Melville, Beresford Valentine
Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
Milvain, Thomas
Mitchell, William (*Burnley*)
Molesworth, Sir Lewis
Montagu, G. (*Huntingdon*

Montagu,Hon.J.Scott(*Hants.*)
More, R. Jasper (*Shropshire*)
Morgan,David J(*Wal.hamstw*)
Morgan, Hn. F. (*Monm'thsh.*)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Mowbray, Sir Robt. Gray C.
Murray,RtHn.AGraham(*Bute*
Murray, Chas. J. (*Coventry*)
Myers, William Henry
Newdegate, Francis A. N.
Nicholson, William Graham
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Parker, Sir Gilbert
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pemberton, John S. G.
Percy, Earl
Pilkington, Lt.-Col. Richard
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Plummer, Walter R.
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pym, C. Guy
Quilter, Sir Cuthbert
Randles, John S.
Rattigan, Sir William Henry
Reid, James (*Greenock*)
Renwick, George
Ridley, S. F. (*Bethnal Green*)
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Sadler, Col. Samuel Alexander
Samuel, Harry S. (*Limehouse*)
Saunderson,Rt. Hn.Col. E. J.
Seely,Maj.J.E.B.(*IsleofWight*
Seton-Karr, Sir Henry
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw-Stewart, M.H.(*Renfrew*)
Sinclair, Louis (*Romford*)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Smith, Abel H. (*Hertford, E.*)
Smith,H C(*North'mb.Tyneside*
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Spencer, Sir E. (*W.Bromwich*)
Stanley, Edward Jas. (*Somerset*
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stewart,SirMarkJ.M'Taggart
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Stock, James Henry
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Strutt, Hon. Charles Hedley
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Talbot,Rt.Hn.J G.(*Oxf dUniv.*
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Thorburn, Sir Walter
Thornton, Percy M.
Tritton, Charles Ernest
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Wanklyn, James Leslie
Warde, Colonel C. E.
Webb, Col. William George
Welby,Lt.-ColA.C.E.(*Taunton*
Wharton, Rt. Hon. J. Lloyd
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Willox, Sir John Archibald
Wilson, John (*Glasgow*)
Wilson,J.W. (*Worcestersh.,N.*
Wodehouse,.Rt.Hn E.R.(*Bath*
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Worsley-Taylor, Hry. Wilson
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Wylie, Alexander
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Wyndham-Quin, MajorW. H.
Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Abraham, W. (*Cork, N.E.*)
Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Allen, Chas. P. (*Glos., Stroud*)
Ambrose, Robert
Asher, Alexander
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Austin, Sir John
Barlow, John Emmott
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (*Cork, S.*)
Bayley, Thomas (*Derbyshire*)
Black, Alexander William
Blake, Edward
Boland, John
Bolton, Thomas Dolling
Brand, Hon. Arthur G.
Broadhurst, Henry
Burke, E. Haviland
Burns, John
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Campbell, John (*Armagh, S.*)
Carew, James Laurence
Causton, Richard Knight
Cawley, Frederick
Channing, Francis Allston
Clancy, John Joseph
Cogan, Denis J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Craig,Robert Hunter (*Lanark*)
Crean, Eugene
Crooks,William
Cullinan, J.
Delany, William
Devlin,Chas.Ramsay(*Galway*)
Dillon, John
Doogan, P. C.
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Duffy, William J.
Dunn, Sir William
Edwards, Frank
Emmott, Alfred
Evans, Saml. T. (*Glamorgan*)
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ffrench, Peter
Field, William
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, J. M. F.
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gilhooly, James
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert J.
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gordon, J. (*Londonderry, S.*)
Grant, Corrie
Grey, Rt. Hn. Sir E. (*Berwick*
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hammond, John
Hardie, J. Keir (*Merthyr Tyd*
Harrington, Timothy
Hayden, John Patrick
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Healy, Timothy Michael
Hemphill, Rt. Hon. Chas. H
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (*Bristl, E*
Hutchinson, Dr.CharlesFredk.
Jameson, Major J. Eustace
Jones,William(*Carnarvonshire*
Jordan, Jeremiah
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kennedy, Patrick James
Kilbride, Denis
Lambert, George
Law, H. Alex. (*Donegal, W.*)
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (*Cornwall*)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leamy, Edmund
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (*Accrington*)
Leigh, Sir Joseph
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lundon, W.
MacDonnell, Dr. Mark A.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
M'Govern, T.
M'Killop, W. (*Sligo, North*)
Mansfield, Horace Rendall
Mappin, Sir Fredk. Thorpe
Mitchell, Edw. (*Fermanagh, N.*
Mooney, John J.
Moulton, John Fletcher
Murnaghan, George
Murphy, John
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nolan, Col. JohnP (*Galway,N.*
Nolan, Joseph (*Louth, S.*)
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, James F. X. (*Cork*)
O'Brien, K. (*Tipperary, Mid*)
O'Brien, Patrick (*Kilkenny*)
O'Brien, P. J. *Tipperary, N.*)
O'Brien, William (*Cork*)
O'Connor, James (*Wicklow, W*
O'Connor, T. P. (*Liverpool*)
O'Doherty, William
O'Donnell, John (*Mayo, S.*)
O'Donnell, T. (*Kerry, W.*)
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, Conor (*Mayo, N.*)
O'Kelly, J. (*Roscommon, N.*)
O'Malley, William
O'Mara, James
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
O'Shee, James John
Palmer, Sir C. M. (*Durham*)
Paulton, James Mellor
Power, Patrick Joseph

Reddy, M.
Redmond, Jn. E. (*Waterford*)
Redmond, William (*Clare*)
Reid, Sir R. Threshie (*Dumfries*
Rickett, J. Compton
Roche, John
Roe, Sir Thomas
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (*Cleveland*)
Schwann, Charles E.
Shackleton, David James
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Soares, Ernest J.
Sullivan, Donal
Taylor, Theo. C. (*Radcliffe*)
Thomas, A. (*Carmarthen, E.*)
Thomas, Sir A. (*Glam., E.*)
Thomas, David Alfred (*Merthyr*
Thomas, J. A. (*Glam., Gower*)
Thompson Dr E. C (*Monagh'n, N*
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Tully, Jasper
Wallace, Robert
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
White, Patrick (*Meath, N.*)
Whitley, J. H (*Halifax*)
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Wilson, H. J. (*York, W. R.*)
Wilson, John (*Durham, Mid*)
Young, Samuel

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
Sir Thomas Esmonde and
Captain Donelan.

And, it being half-past Seven of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

NEW SOUTH WALES AND PREFERENTIAL TARIFFS—MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT (UNDER STANDING ORDER No. 10.)

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): Sir, I rise to move the Motion for which I obtained leave this afternoon, and I do so in order, in the first place, that we may get fuller information on the subject to which it refers than it is possible to obtain by question and answer across the floor of the House, and also because this is the most emphatic manner in which attention can be called to the extraordinary situation which has been created by the recent conduct of His Majesty's Government in dealing with a vital interest of the country. I wish to say at the outset that I have no criticism whatever to pass upon the Government of New South Wales. I have no surprise to express at their action, and still less any blame to attribute to them in the matter. I need not dwell on what are become axioms in this House and in the country, the pride and satisfaction with which we all view the cordial and friendly relations between us and our colonies. There is not a man among us who would not do all that lies in his power to maintain the sense of union and solidarity which exists between the mother country and the colonies. But upon what is that sense of union founded? It is founded upon freedom—upon administrative and fiscal freedom. Anyone who goes back on the history of the past will soon become aware that before that freedom was established there were constant bickerings, constant friction, and constant irritation. And among the objections which I entertain to certain proposals which are now in the air is that they seem to me to narrow, repress, and embarrass this essential freedom in fiscal matters, and therefore may be the cause of irritation among the colonies, though, as we know, these proposals are designed for an entirely different purpose. The colonial Governments are not only entitled, but are required, in the exercise of this fiscal freedom, to seek every advantage for their own people. Therefore no one could be surprised at the intense interest that was displayed by these Governments in recent events and recent utterances in this country. I am aware that I am greatly circumscribed by the rules of order as to the breadth and length of the topic to which I wish to refer in dealing with this matter. But the message from the New South Wales Government, to which I desire to direct attention, has two parts. One expresses approval of preferential trade, and the other expresses satisfaction at the prospect of special trade relations with the mother country, which involve, of course, retaliatory duties against other countries. These are two parts, it seems to me, of one policy. They are intertwined with each other, and almost inseparable from each other. But that policy is not before the House in the Motion I am about to make, and therefore we cannot discuss it. It is sufficient for me to say that I am entirely opposed to it, not only as being unsuited to the circumstances of the country, but as being also most prejudicial to its best interests. But what is before us is this—why are we called upon to deal with this great question, going down to the very roots of our commerce and our fiscal arrangements, at this present moment? Here is a colony at the other end of the world approving of certain schemes. Are these schemes definitely before the country and the world, or are they not?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): Mr. Speaker, for the convenience of the House, and the proper conduct of this debate, I beg to ask your ruling. Is it in order to discuss the fiscal policy of the country on this Motion for the adjournment of the House, on a matter of urgent and definite public importance which has been defined by the right hon. Gentleman opposite?

*MR. SPEAKER: It is not in order to discuss that. The question for the discussion of which the leave of the House has been given is a somewhat narrow one. As I understand it, it is whether the Government of the Colony of New South Wales have understood the speeches of the Prime Minister and Colonial Secretary as expressing the opinion of the Government, and, if they have so understood them, whether their view is correct.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: That is precisely the point to which I intend to address myself; and the right hon. Gentleman would have known that if he had favoured me with his attention to what I said a couple of sentences back expressing my perfect acquaintance with the circumstance that we cannot enter in this debate on the merits of the new fiscal policy. What I say is, here is this message from the Government of New South Wales, expressing its approval of certain schemes. Are those schemes definitely before the country and the world? Is there a Government in power which has announced its policy on the subject? No, Sir; notoriously not. Among Ministers there are conflicting views. Among their supporters there is a good deal of dismay and bewilderment. [MINISTERIAL Cries of "No, no."] Apparently there are some fortunate gentlemen opposite who are neither dismayed nor bewildered. The Prime Minister himself has proclaimed that he has no settled convictions in the matter. And yet these are the circumstances in which the Colonial Secretary has expressly invited expressions of opinion from the colonies on the subject—opinion, that is, on a policy to which we understood the Government was not committed, and on which Ministers, according to their own declarations and disavowals, differ seriously among themselves. The right hon. Gentleman wrote a letter in which he called for that expression of colonial opinion, and in which he said that if colonial opinion was hostile or apathetic "there would not be the slightest possibility of carrying through so great a reform." Therefore we need not be surprised that the Government of New South Wales responded to the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman and expressed its opinion on the subject. The necessity which compels me to-night to bring this question before the House arises from a two-fold danger to which the country may not be fully alive—a danger arising from the present situation. In the first place, hopes and expectations are, by this process, being awakened among the colonies——

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Question, question.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: This is the question.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise again to put a question of order to you. I need not say that I desire the most open discussion of this question. But I wish to know what those who may have to reply to the right hon. Gentleman will be in order in saying. Up to the present moment the right hon. Gentleman has not referred to the only point upon which there could possibly be any expression of opinion on the part of the New South Wales Government – namely, "the declaration of the British Government that every self-governing colony shall be secured in the free exercise of its right"—I am quoting from the message, Sir—"to enter into closer trade relations with the mother country." The point I desire to put to you, Sir, is this, that while under the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman it is perfectly competent for him to enter into any question connected with any declaration of the British Government, it is not competent for him to enter into the question of the opinions of the New

South Wales Government regarding preferential trade which they do not attribute to the British Government.

*MR. SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman is putting rather a wide interpretation on his own Motion. If the right hon. Gentleman had secured the leave of the House for a Motion in wider terms than this, which he might have done, he could have spoken more widely; but the Motion for the adjournment to which he has chosen to confine himself consists of the suggestion that the New South Wales Government misunderstood certain statements made in this House in assuming them to be expressions of the opinion of the Cabinet as such, and that that is a thing which ought to be cleared up. That is a question within very narrow limits indeed. It does not raise the question of the opinion of the colonies as to fiscal policy, nor does it raise the merits of the fiscal question between this country and the colonies. It is drawn within narrow limits, and I think the discussion should be confined to those limits.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: My contention, Sir, will be this, that the Government have contrived so that the New South Wales Government have formed the opinion that this is the definite policy of His Majesty's Government.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: "Question."

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: And I was proceeding to say that if that was so hopes and expectations—I think that was the phrase I used—had been raised and might be raised in other colonies which would stand a good chance in certain contingencies of being subject to bitter disappointment, and that calamitous results would be caused to the sentiment existing between the colonies and this country.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will forgive me for interrupting him, but it will be my duty, I suppose, to reply to him, and I want, on a point of order, to know exactly what it is to which I shall be entitled to reply. May I call your attention, Sir, to the fact that the message which is the basis of this Motion for adjournment consists of two paragraphs? The first paragraph deals with preferential duties, and attributes no opinion to His Majesty's Government at all; the second does not deal with preferential duties, but does deal with the case in which a colony is penalised for giving preferential duties. Now that is attributed to His Majesty's Government; and I want to know whether the attack on the obscurity of the utterances from this bench is to be carried over into the first paragraph, or whether it ought to be confined to the second paragraph, which deals simply and solely with the method of dealing with the case in which a foreign country might penalise a British colony which has given preferential tariffs to this country.

*MR. SPEAKER: I have not seen the message; I have only looked at the Motion on the Paper. With reference to the Motion on the Paper, I am clear that the matter for discussion is the misunderstanding caused by two certain speeches upon one certain point, that point being whether these speeches are isolated expressions of opinion to which the Cabinet is in no way committed. That is the only question which the right hon. Gentleman is entitled to discuss.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: What we wish to do, Sir—and this is a peculiar method of conducting business—the question I wish to put before the House, and especially to address to the Prime Minister, is whether the message from the Government of New South Wales involves a misapprehension of the speeches of the two right hon. Gentlemen.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It is only the second paragraph which deals with it.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The second paragraph and the first paragraph are indissolubly associated, and the second paragraph contains more than the part which the right hon. Gentleman read. It contains an explicit reference to the case of Canada, which points directly——

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Not the first paragraph.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Which points directly, as the means of achieving what is required, to the establishment of retaliatory duties against other countries. Therefore we have the whole scheme, the definite scheme, approved of by the New South Wales Government and attributed to his Majesty's Government.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: We wish to know whether they have understood them rightly in that or not; and if the right hon. Gentleman would explain to us now what he re lly did mean and what his colleague meant in those speeches I might sit down, for it was to explore that circumstance and for no other purpose that I moved the adjournment. I have not moved the adjournment to bring any cavilling accusation against the Government. I have moved it in order that we may understand how the truth really lies in a matter which is not a mere question of idle curiosity, but which really may have the most extended and pernicious effect upon the relations between the colonies and the mother country. I say that if such an effect as was produced on the mind of the Government of New South Wales is really deducible from the speeches of the two right hon. Gentlemen then they have, as I said before, had hopes raised which may lead to bitter disappointment in the end. This is only the beginning, Sir. This is the first response from the colonial Governments to the appeal which has been made to them; but other colonies will also wish to express their opinions, under the assumption, or the delusion, that they were fulfilling the desire of His Majesty's Government in doing so. We have as great a regard and esteem for our fellow-subjects of the colonies as they have for us in the mother country—and I could not put it in stronger terms—but we desire above all things that there should be no disappointment on their part in this matter in which they take so deep an interest. Let it be perfectly clear from the first how this country stands. We have been led to understand by right hon. Gentlemen opposite that they have no policy, that they are looking for a policy. I will not dwell upon that, lest I should be immediately corrected and made to sit down as being outside the terms of the Motion, not by you, Sir, but by the two Members on the other side who are determined to keep this question within as narrow limits as possible. I also desire to keep within the limits of the rules of the House, but, I trust, within no narrower limits. The last thing we desire is to inflict disappointment on the colonies, with all the irritation and estrangement that may ensue, and if there is a misapprehension really conveyed to the Government of one of the oldest and most famous and best-equipped of our colonies, if that is the effect upon them, then how dangerous it may be if such a misconception prevails when it is entirely in conflict with that which has been represented to the people of this country, and which the people understand to be the present position of affairs. I say that there are two dangers. There is first of all the danger of disappointment to the colonies to which I have referred; but there is another danger which comes closer to us arising from these processes. It is the danger that the people of this country may, step by step and unconsciously, find themselves committed by these processes to a policy which they have never approved, and which a large portion of them—the majority of them—view either with disapproval or with doubt. I do not think that can be doubted. These two dangers which I foresee are the consequences of the loose and vague way in which this great fiscal revolution—it is nothing less—that has been foreshadowed has been launched upon us, in defiance of Constitutional rule, without the approval of the Cabinet, and in opposition to the avowed opinion of the Finance Minister, not under a plea of urgent necessity——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I think the right hon. Gentleman is opening up, or endeavouring to open up, the whole question of the merits of the fiscal policy. It is possible that he might have framed his question to meet that, but that is not what he has done. I must ask him to endeavour to confine himself to the question of the necessity of correcting any misapprehension that may have been caused in the mind of the Government of New South Wales by the speeches of the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I can only repeat that my object is to obtain from the Government an explicit statement of their actual position in this matter. If we get that I may renounce all those little observations upon their mode of conducting business into which I was led to indulge when you, Sir, corrected me. We want to know precisely —and having said this I shall sit down— we want to know precisely what the position of the Government in this matter is, and whether they have, as the New South Wales Government think they have, a definite policy, covering the matters referred to in this message. I think that something at least will have been gained if we can obtain from the Prime Minister a positive declaration that the changes indicated in this message and assumed in New South Wales to represent the policy of His Majesty's Government are not and may possibly never be their accepted policy, and also that the Government will secure this country from being committed, against its knowledge and will, to a change so vast and so critical to the fortunes of this country.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.*)

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I hope, Sir, that the right hon. Gentleman did not think that we, my right hon. friend and I, were guilty of any discourtesy to himself by rising to a point of order at the beginning of his speech. I can assure him that that is not the case; but in a Motion drawn as his is drawn, and in reference to such a message as that received from the Governor of New South Wales, it is really extremely difficult for us to know without rising to a point of order what exactly is included within the limits of the right hon. Gentleman's question, or what we are expected to reply to. The right hon. Gentleman is pursuing, I think, in the present case a very extraordinary course. I do not think that in my experience the Leader of the Opposition has ever moved the adjournment of the House. It is possible that a case may be found in the past. Whether it has been done I do not know. But whether that be the case or not, I confess I should have thought that if the right hon. Gentleman wanted to challenge His Majesty's Government there was at his disposal a perfectly well-known Constitutional method by which the whole question could have been raised, on which no question of order could have been raised, upon which the limitations or the extent of the debate would have been beyond doubt, and on which every statement made by His Majesty's Government, or by any member of it, could have been challenged by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite. But they have adopted a more prudent course. I congratulate them upon their wisdom. They have not, I will not say dared, because that would be a suggestion of want of courage, which is the last thing I should ever think of suggesting of them, but they have not thought it wise, they have not thought it strategically and technically prudent to meet us face to face. They have preferred a Motion for the adjournment of the House, a Motion in its nature always inconclusive, a Motion which raises no definite issue, which is and must be narrowly restricted in its scope, and which, above all, must be narrowly restricted as to the length of the debate which it can occasion. I do not mean to say that they were unwise. I am not at all sure that if I were in their place I would not have done exactly the same thing. But, at all events, that is what they have done, and it is really ludicrous, if I may say so, for the right hon. Gentleman, who does not dare, or does not choose, to take the bolder course to come down—I hear muttered disapproval from hon. Gentlemen opposite of what I am saying—but if the right hon. Gentlemen thinks the course His Majesty's Government is pursuing is so inimical to the interests of this country—[AN HON. MEMBER: He does not know what it is.]—if he thinks the speeches we have been making and the hopes he alleges we are raising are inimical to the interests of this country, to the interests of the colonies, and to the interests of the Empire as a whole, let him take the obvious course, let him challenge us to a debate in which the whole question can be raised.

MR. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple): Will you let your Party vote as they like?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I think the hon. Gentleman is a new Member of the House, and probably he is not acquainted with the traditions of this assembly on questions of this import. The hon. Gentleman has, however, made a suggestion which I am sure he meant for the best. Now, Sir, I pass from the extraordinary course which the right hon. Gentleman has taken on the present occasion to the substance of the speech which he has just delivered; and I may preface the observations I have to make on that speech by reading the message from the Colony of New South Wales which has been the occasion of the right hon. Gentleman's incursion into the time which was to be devoted to the discussion of the Irish Land Bill. The message reads as follows—

> "My Government recognise that preferential trade will be directly advantageous to Australia by securing her a market for her natural products, and, believing that this policy is in the highest degree conducive to the welfare and solidarity of the Empire and the union of British-speaking people, strongly support your proposal to investigate the practicability of such a preference."

That is the first paragraph, and I may say on that paragraph the right hon. Gentleman appears to suppose that the Government, on the subject of investigation, have spoken with a doubtful voice; I can assure him that that is not so. We are all unanimously in favour of an investigation, which is the only thing that the Colony of New South Wales refers to in the paragraph I have just read. I venture to say that paragraph may be put aside, because it is perfectly clear that the Governor and the Government of New South Wales absolutely apprehend, and with perfect accuracy, the views of His Majesty's Government on this point. We think there ought to be an investigation. The Government of New South Wales think there ought to be an investigation. There is therefore an absolute concordat not only between the Government of New South Wales and my right hon. friend and myself, but between the Government of New South Wales and the whole of His Majesty's Government. Therefore there is no question about the first paragraph, which I do not think was referred to in the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman which was put into your hands, Sir. But, even if I am wrong in that, I venture to say we may dismiss that paragraph, because the Government of New South Wales have, with absolute precision, understood the views of His Majesty's Government on that subject. We agree with them and they agree with us. Now, I come to the second paragraph, which, if I rightly understood the right hon. Gentleman, was the subject on which he desired to move the adjournment. The second paragraph reads as follows—

> "Also, realising that what is Canada's turn to-day may be Australia's to-morrow, they express great satisfaction at the declaration by the British Government that every self-governing colony shall be secured in the free exercise of its right to enter into closer trade relations with the mother country."

That, I understand, is what the right hon. Gentleman quarrels with; that is the paragraph which he says raises false hopes. That is the paragraph which the right hon. Gentleman says is ultimately to cause disappointment in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Cape, and so forth. I hope that paragraph will cause no disappointment and raise no false hopes anywhere. What false hopes does it raise? Am I to understand at this moment that, if the right hon. Gentleman were head of the Government to-morrow, he would say that if a colony endeavoured to enter into special fiscal relations with the mother country, and foreign countries penalised them for taking that course, he and his friends would sit silently by and watch that process of intimidation going on in the case of colony after colony? If he does not mean that, what are the false hopes that have been raised? If there is no difference between right hon. Gentlemen who sit on that Bench and those who sit on this Bench on that subject, how can there be false hopes raised? Let Governments change, let Party power be transferred from one of the great centres of public opinion to the other in this House, and if the right hon. Gentleman opposite and his friends agree with us on that subject there will be no disappointment. In that case the policy of this country will be a continuous policy.

It will be a policy of supporting the colonies in any endeavour they may make to give preferential treatment to the manufactures of this country. There is, indeed, one hypothesis on which disappointment may occur, but am I to believe it is an hypothesis which we are seriously to entertain? Are we to believe that if a General Election took place to-morrow and right hon. Gentlemen opposite came into power, they would tell the colonies, "You have nothing more to hope for from us. You have, indeed, expressed a desire to enter into closer fiscal union with us. You have expressed your intention of introducing a preferential tariff in our favour"——

*MR. SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman is now following the error of the right hon. Baronet.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: May I read again, Sir, the paragraph to which the right hon. Gentleman referred as the one which raised false hopes? That is the point. The right hon. Gentleman's point was that in the statement referred to in the second paragraph of that message we had raised false hopes. Let me read the paragraph again. [The right hon. Gentleman then read the second paragraph of the message.] Now, Sir, I understood that the right hon. Gentleman, in the first place, asked me whether that was the view of the Government, and, in the second place, proceeded to criticise that view, if it was the view of the Government, on the ground that it raised false hopes. It was to the latter point I was addressing myself, and I should be glad to know whether I am in order in answering it.

*MR. SPEAKER: I think the right hon. Gentleman is in order in explaining whether this paragraph does or does not evince a mistake on the part of the colony; that is the point to which I understand him to refer. But I understood that the right hon. Gentleman was going somewhat beyond that, and was adverting to the general fiscal policy.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Very well, Sir, I quite understand, and entirely bow to your ruling. Let me say, and I shall confine what I have to say to one sentence, the last paragraph of this message does express the opinion of His Majesty's Government; we think it does not raise false hopes in the colonies, and that it can never raise false hopes in the colonies unless hon. Gentlemen opposite mean to abandon every colony.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): The Prime Minister's speech contains the most momentous declaration of any that has been made up to the present time. The right hon. Gentleman began his speech by taunting the Opposition with not proposing a Vote of Censure. Sitting next to the Prime Minister is the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who would vote with the right hon. Gentleman on a Vote of Censure, but who agrees with the Opposition on the main points of the question at issue. In a Vote of Censure at this moment in the House of Lords the Duke of Devonshire and Lord Balfour of Burleigh would vote with the Administration. Yet their speeches have given unqualified satisfaction to the Opposition on the questions at issue. Surely these facts alone show that on a national issue of this kind, involving the most momentous new departure we have seen in our time, the opinion of Parliament would be hopelessly misrepresented by a Party division. The Prime Minister went on to make the most startling of the new departures which have been made—leaving aside those matters which we cannot discuss to-night, the duties on food and preferential tariffs—the right hon. Gentleman informed us that the Government are in favour of retaliation.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I never mentioned the word "retaliation." What I said was, and I should be glad to know the right hon. Baronet's opinion upon it, that we did not mean to leave a colony in the lurch simply because it gave preferential duties in favour of this country.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: If the Government mean that they are going to war of course I can understand the distinction the Prime Minister has drawn; but I confess I thought that in these declarations of their policy the

Government were dealing with fiscal policy alone. If that is so, I will point out that no suggestion has ever been made in regard to penalising except by retaliation. A very brilliant Member on the other side has described recent speeches of the Prime Minister on these questions as reminding him of the last series of sermons preached by an Anglican clergyman before he went over to the Church of Rome. The declaration to-night has been one which those who are students of the Prime Minister's speeches and of his past were led to expect from him personally, but not from the Government of which he is a Member. The Prime Minister has always been in favour of retaliation, and the other night he quoted his own speeches of 1880–81 in favour of it; but on those occasions the right hon. Gentleman received his answer and, I should have thought, his quietus from the present Colonial Secretary, who pointed out that to penalise foreign countries would hurt ourselves alone. Such are our interests that the measures taken would fall with redoubled force on ourselves. The policy of retaliation has often been fatal to the trade of those who have employed it, and it has never in any case in the history of the world's tariffs been a step towards free trade, but always a step towards avowed protection. The Prime Minister has said that New South Wales is a free trade colony; but it is no longer either a free trade or a protectionist colony. I believe its Prime Minister is a protectionist, and that there are Members of the Cabinet who are free traders, but New South Wales has nothing whatever to do with these questions under the Federal Constitution, under which they are remitted to the Government of the Commonwealth. We are so tightly tied up in this debate that we cannot discuss on its merits even the question of retaliation, although that, owing to the declaration of the Prime Minister, is the question at stake. But this Motion, which can only be inadequately supported on the present occasion, is necessary because of the manner in which, up to to-night, the Prime Minister has fenced with all the questions at issue. On this occasion, the Prime Minister has been faithful to his past opinions, and undoubtedly he has settled opinions on this one particular point, at any rate. In 1880–81 the sole supporter in argument of the right hon. Gentleman in this house was the present Member for the Kirkdale Division of Liverpool. At that time Spain had penalised us, and it was conclusively proved that that action on the part of Spain did not damage our trade, and Spain tired of her action and dropped it. In those debates the Colonial Secretary in reply to the present Prime Minister called this doctrine of retaliation by the name of the new heterodoxy. Our trade had increased in Spain, and we had not suffered.

*MR. SPEAKER: This does not arise upon the Motion.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: Notoriously the majority of Members on the Ministerial benches who have expressed their views at the present juncture are opposed to this new departure. The Government have assured us that they are making no change in fiscal policy without inquiry, yet without and before inquiry the Prime Minister has announced that the Government are in favour of retaliation.

MR. ROBSON (South Shields): Before dealing with the merits of the Resolution itself, perhaps I may add one word to what has been said by my right hon. friend the Member for the Forest of Dean as to the suggestion that we ought to have proceeded by way of a Vote of Censure. The Prime Minister told us that we were unable or afraid to meet him face to face. I think that taunt is disposed of by the question, "Which face?" We may be accused of lack of courage, I think unjustly, but I do not think that any political party could be so utterly lacking in courage as to be afraid to meet face to face in debate those whose convictions are absolutely unsettled. What is the Motion before the House? It is a Motion which condemns and deplores the misconceptions likely to arise in the colonies by reason of the unsettled and unsatisfactory attitude of His Majesty's Government. The Government have made declarations which the colonies appear to have misunderstood.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No; they have apprehended them absolutely accurately.

MR. ROBSON : So the Prime Minister says, but I hope I may be allowed to proceed—and perhaps without further interruption—to make good what I have just alleged. Let us take the Prime Minister's attitude to-night. He has made, in explicit terms, a most momentous declaration. He has told us, in terms that will go forth to the colonies, that the last paragraph of this message is correct, and that the Government do declare that—

> "Every self-governing colony shall be secured in the free exercise of its right to enter into closer trade relations with the mother country."

Let us not, in the great controversy that is about to begin, stop short at the use of mere phrases. We are about to enter upon a controversy such as we have not had for fifty years, and we must get into the way of analysing these pretentious generalities. What is meant by the Gentleman who framed this message when he uses the words "securing the colonies in the free exercise of their right to enter into closer trade relations with the mother country?" What is the substance of the phrase? For that we have to go back to the two speeches which are referred to and see what the speakers themselves referred to. What are the indications that His Majesty's Government have given of the means by which they think these closer trade relations ought to be secured? The right hon. Gentleman to-night has disclaimed having made any pronouncement in favour of retaliation. If that be so, the colonies may well complain that they have been misled, and this Motion is supremely necessary. What has the right hon. Gentleman said himself? Let us take his own words, with which I have come prepared. He said—

> "I go further—

That is than some suggestion made by the Colonial Secretary,

> "And say that if there is really to be an attempt on the part of foreign countries to declare that we are so separated from our self-governing colonies that they will be treated as separate nations—"

And here I pause for a moment to invite the House to consider what that means. For fiscal purposes our colonies. little as we may like the phrase, are indeed, in constitutional position, separate nations. The right hon. Gentleman continued—and I ask the House to mark these words in view of his declaration to-night—

> "Then I say we shall be forced, by patriotism, by public opinion, by every regard for ourselves and our colonies, to resist this, and if need be, by retaliatory tariffs. Why not?"

Why not? By all means do it, but have the honesty and candour to say you are going to do it. Do not imagine that I am complaining of the policy of the Government; that would be out of order; but it is not out of order to complain of their lack of courage or candour. That is the proposal of the Prime Minister. Retaliatory tariffs is the one definite item of policy to which he has committed himself. He has no settled convictions on the question of taxing the food of the people; that is not a matter which has ever disturbed his serenity; but he has a settled conviction on this very point—which the colonies appreciate as a settled conviction; he has pronounced in favour of retaliation. Now let me ask again what it is which has brought this message from the colonies by referring to the speech of the Colonial Secretary. He has dealt with this question even more fully, but not more explicitly, than the Prime Minister. In his speech at Birmingham the right hon. Gentleman described and condemned the policy of Germany in treating Canada as a separate fiscal unit; and he said that in our present condition we were practically helpless so far as the defence of our colonies was concerned, and he went on to indicate that he thought our present position a humiliating one. He proceeded to say how that position was to be met. He said there were two alternatives. The first, which he mentioned only for the purpose of excluding, was to stand by the definition of free trade "as interpreted by Little Englanders of the Manchester school"—meaning, of course, the right hon. Gentleman whom the Prime Minister keeps in his place—the Chancellor of the Exchequer—the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Goschen, and, I believe, the majority of the Party opposite. That is an alternative which the Government disclaim, and the colonies note the fact. They have noted that according to the Colonial Secretary the old-fashioned definition of free trade is no longer to prevail; that belongs only to Little Englanders; they naturally think that the declaration of the Colonial Secretary binds his Government. If it does not bind the Government, what does the right hon. Gentleman mean, and what does the Government mean by permitting such language to be used in the ears of the colonies? Now we see how the colonies were likely to be misled. On the confession of the Prime Minister to-night, they have been misled, because the right hon. Gentleman has made an interruption which can have been meant only to disclaim adhesion to a policy of retaliation.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member is mistaken. I have distinctly said with regard to both the paragraphs in the message that has been sent that I agree with them. There is no question of misleading there.

MR. ROBSON: The right hon. Gentleman has not exactly met the allegation with regard to his consistency. He may agree with both paragraphs to-night, but we have to deal with what he has said on other occasions. On a previous occasion he was in favour of retaliation; to-night—and this is what I was pointing out—he has made an interruption which, if it is to be treated as an orderly and a significant interruption, means that so far as he is concerned nobody has a right to assume that he is in favour of retaliation.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: What I have said is that I agree with the statement that every self-governing colony shall be secured, as far as we can do it, in the free exercise of its right to enter into closer trade relations. [OPPOSITION cries of "How?"] I have not said a word about retaliation. I have certainly not committed myself to the proposition that there is no other method of attaining that object. Of course the hon. Member knows I do not shrink from retaliation if necessary. [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh."]

MR. ROBSON: With all respect to the right hon. Gentleman, I fail to see how his interruption is an answer, or even relevant to the point I was making. The point with which I am dealing is not the phrase which the right hon. Gentleman keeps repeating, but his own declaration as to what his policy would be in a given contingency—a contingency, indeed, which has arisen, viz., a fiscal conflict between Germany and one of our colonies—and that declaration is in favour of retaliation. I am also dealing with a speech of the Colonial Secretary. I have mentioned one alternative; the second is, and he stated it quite clearly, "retaliation, if necessary." He excluded the first alternative; what did he say about the second? He had reached a point in his speech at which a little candour and courage would have been serviceable to the country. He said, "I leave it in your hands"—leaving his audience, the country, and the colonies, under the distinct impression that he, speaking with all the authority of Colonial Secretary, was in favour of retaliation, but afraid to commit himself by a definite declaration. And we are taunted with want of courage! I wonder that any gentleman sitting on that bench can use the word "courage" without a blush. The Prime Minister, at deputations and so forth, speaks of retaliation; to-night he is most hurt if anyone suggests that he has said anything in its favour. That is courage!

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I think it is rather hard that the hon. and learned Gentleman should make a use of my speeches and interruptions, which is rather in excess of his privileges as a debater. I have stated that I agree with the second paragraph of the message. That does not touch retaliation. [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh."] Well, wait a moment. I have not hesitated to say that, if other methods failed, I do not shrink from retaliation; but I am not certain that there are not other methods. That is the only thing I complain of.

MR. ROBSON: Possibly I have not made my point clear to the right hon. Gentleman. What I was pointing out was that we have got to take the language of the Colonial Prime Minister in reference to the proposals of the two right hon. Gentlemen opposite, and when the message talks of "securing the colonies in the free exercise of their right," that language must be read in connection with the proposals which I am reading from the speech of the Colonial Secretary, but which the right hon. Gentleman ignores in order to read to me time after time this message. Now let me go back to the speech of the Colonial Secretary. I have said that he does not appear in his speech to have suffered from courage or candour. No doubt he is supposed by many to be the incarnation of courage and candour in debate, and I daresay he is, judged by the standard of those among whom he sits. But what a standard of comparison! Let us take what the right hon. Gentleman said in another part of his speech, because the right hon. Gentleman is inconsistent not only from year to year, and from month to month, but also from moment to moment, and from sentence to sentence. In the course of his speech he put a very remarkable meaning on the policy he was propounding. In his peroration—and nothing is more dangerous to the consistency of an argument than a peroration—he made the declaration, which also has gone forth to the colonies and has been considered by them as something to be taken in reference to all these suggestions of retaliation, "I am in favour of a self-sufficient and self-sustaining Empire." Perhaps I had better quote his words—

"I believe in a British Empire."

AN HON. MEMBER: Do you?

MR. ROBSON: There are some persons belonging to the Party opposite who are always anxious to convince foreigners that one half of the people of this country are against England. It seems to be the one object of their lives to convince the world at large that those who take pride, as we do, in our country are anxious to injure her. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say that the first duty of the British Empire was to maintain friendly relations with all the nations of the world, and yet, even if alone, to be self-sustaining and self sufficient. That sentence deals with two questions: our friendship with all the world, and our position if alone. According to the Colonial Secretary there is no other alternative. "I believe in an Empire which is self-sustaining and self-sufficient." That is a fine phrase, but what does it mean? Do not accuse us of misrepresentation if we tell the country that hon. Members opposite believe in an Empire self-sustaining and self-sufficient, which means an Empire without any Continental or world-wide trade. That is the phrase which goes forth to the colonies, and encourages every senseless Protectionist in the British dominions to believe that this great Empire can sustain its strength, maintain its population, keep up its vigour, power, and position, without its trade. It is a misunderstanding to which an end should be put at once. I do not expect the Government will put an end to it. We should have to drag out of them, bit by bit, something in the nature, if not of a settled conviction, at all events of a definite policy. I only hope they will reach their policy long before they reach their conviction. In the meantime I think my right hon. friend has done well to bring forward this motion to-night, and to take yet another step forward in that which I am proud to think has now become the great mission and function of this Party—the defence of the food, the trade, and the Empire of our people.

LORD HUGH CECIL (Greenwich): I confess I have listened to this discussion with very great regret. I do not say that in any spirit of censure—it would be presumptuous on my part to do so—on any of those who have spoken on one side or the other. It is natural and inevitable, in the condition of public life and the ordinary circumstances of debates in this House, that a question of this kind should at once become the opportunity for one Party to attack the other and for the other Party to retort upon its assailants. And, of course, that opportunity has been abundantly used on both sides during this discussion. But I think we shall be very foolish, and that we shall perform very badly our duty to the country, if we conceal from ourselves that this is a question of gravity, portentously greater than those which generally occupy our attention. The particular aspect of the matter which is in our minds, and which is raised by the Motion for adjournment, is a misunderstanding with the colonies; and that is a very grave matter. I should not be in order, of course, in pointing out how very grave are all the other aspects of the matter, and how closely they affect the well-being of the people and the unity of the Empire. It is impossible to forget how far-reaching the effects of this discussion are likely to be, and it is impossible to keep out of our minds how disastrous and ruinous this controversy is likely to be to the great Unionist Party. I regret this, but I recognise that it is inevitable that the tone of the debate should be what it has been. Perhaps I may be permitted to say that, although this debate has been raised in a partisan manner, I think the Leader of the Opposition has called attention to a real danger. Whatever may be the merits of the Government policy of inquiry, while some Ministers entertain a definite opinion on the one side and some on the other as to what will be the upshot of this inquiry, I do think that it is likely to have a profoundly misleading effect in the colonies, in regard to the real circumstances of the case. So far as an individual Member of the House is likely to make any difference in a matter of this kind, I should like to say how the declarations of the Government sound in ears which are not prejudiced against them and in the ears of one who is strongly convinced of the unwisdom of the policy of the Colonial Secretary. It seems to me that there is an unconcealed ambiguity in the declaration that the Government is in favour of inquiry. It is not concealed from the public that to a portion of the Cabinet it is clear that the inquiry will end in one way, and that to another portion it is equally clear that the inquiry will end in another way; while to a certain portion of the Cabinet, including the Prime Minister himself, there seems some doubt as to what the upshot of the inquiry will be. The Prime Minister, alone among his colleagues, approached the subject with a really open mind. What then is the impression likely to be in the colonies? Most people, when they hear that a subject is going to be inquired into, are inclined to think that such inquiry is the immediate precursor of a great change of policy; and I regret that the other day the Prime Minister in a brilliant speech quoted the analogies of 1845 and 1886, because it might lead those who read his speech to the conclusion that the Government are contemplating a change of policy. But so far I, and many on the Ministerial side of the House, distinctly understand that the Cabinet is absolutely uncommitted in any way whatever to any policy either of retaliation or preferential duties or general protection, such as may be thought to come within some of the phrases the Colonial Secretary has used. I understand the Prime Minister has this evening only expressed his personal opinion that in certain cases retaliation might be useful, and that even in this extreme case, in which many hon. Members would be prepared to recognise that retaliation might be accepted, speaking only in regard to that case and speaking only for himself, the Government as a Government is absolutely uncommitted, and those who support the Government are in like manner absolutely uncommitted to this policy in the slightest degree. It is very important that this should be understood in this country and in the colonies, and especially in New South Wales. I fear that my words will not reach so far, and that the words of those who will be heard there will create a profoundly misleading impression. Gentlemen opposite, following their party advantage, have tried to carry the words of the Prime Minister far beyond their natural meaning, and they will thereby contribute to that very misunderstanding on the other side of the world which it is their avowed object to prevent. I hope that the inquiry will be a genuine inquiry, and will be quite frankly and candidly undertaken; and that it will not be made the opportunity of hurrying those who are doubtful into premature support of a policy which many believe to be no less destructive of the well-being of this country than the policy of Home Rule, which the great Unionist Party has so long successfully resisted.

Sir EDWARD GREY (Northumberland, Berwick): I should not have risen to take part in this debate if it had not been for the, in manner very stirring, and in substance very interesting, speech of the Prime Minister, which raised in my mind certain considerations that I should like to follow a little further. The Prime Minister is singularly unfortunate in this matter. To-night he gave two entirely different impressions—one to the right hon. Member for the Forest of

Dean and another to the noble Lord who has just sat down. The Prime Minister began by deprecating this debate as ill-timed and unreasonable. The other day he pointed out strongly the disadvantages of a Government's coming to a conclusion secretly and then announcing it to the country. The right hon. Gentleman must be beginning to realise—though I fear he is only beginning—the inconvenience of a Government appealing publicly for inquiry and discussion on a subject on which the Members of the Government are diametrically opposed to each other. That is the origin of the telegrams of the Premier of New South Wales. The right hon. Gentleman has taunted us with having moved the adjournment instead of challenging the policy of the Government directly. One course is not the alternative of the other. By challenging his policy, the right hon. Gentleman must mean a Vote of Censure. You may have a Vote of Censure when the Government is prepared to do something or when they have a policy. But this Government is not prepared to do anything, and it has no policy. I will go further and ask the right hon. Gentleman this question. The time of the House is at the right hon. Gentleman's disposal, and, if he disapproves of this Motion, I ask him to remember that the Colonial Secretary publicly invited this House to a discussion of the question. It is not in the interests of any individual or any one Party more than another to have such a discussion. When the Prime Minister taunts us in this way, will he state distinctly whether, before the Session is over, he will respond to the invitation of the Colonial Secretary by giving the House the opportunity of a discussion, and, if so, whether the Government will be prepared to take full part in that discussion? I think that is a fair demand to make in answer to the right hon. Gentleman's remarks.

Now I will follow him a little further into the subject matter of his speech. The Prime Minister asked us another question. When you, Mr. Speaker, intervened in the interests of the limits of debate, he had already asked us whether under certain conditions which might arise we would sit silently by. What conditions did he contemplate? I assume he had in his mind a really hostile discrimination against the United Kingdom or some part of the British Empire. There are contingencies which have not arisen yet, and which, I trust, will never arise, which are really equivalent to acts of war. Suppose a foreign country were to say, "We hate you and we will not have your goods, and will prohibit their entry into our country," that would be a position under which the country could not sit silent. If such a condition did arise, no Government with any courage would ask for discussion, or inquiry, or mandate, but would come forward with their proposals. If that was the sort of consideration which was in the mind of the Prime Minister—a really hostile discrimination—has that condition yet arisen or not? Has it arisen in the case of Germany and Canada to-day? If it has not arisen, then the right hon. Gentleman is really putting a purely hypothetical case before the House. If it has arisen, what does the Prime Minister intend to do? I assume from the silence of the Government they do not consider it has arisen. I am afraid the Prime Minister has not succeeded in clearing up the mystification of the Government of New South Wales. He accepts their statement that—

> "There is a declaration that every self-governing colony shall be secured in the free exercise of its rights to enter into closer trade relations with the mother country."

Has the Government any policy with regard to carrying out this declaration? The question in the mind of the Government of New South Wales, with regard to which it is assumed they have become confused, is how far personal declarations by members of the Government represent the Government or only individual members of the Government. Was what the Prime Minister said to-night said for himself or for the Government? Is he prepared to give this guarantee to the colonies? The words he endorsed—and they amount to a promise—are these—

> "That every self-governing colony will be cecured in the free exercise of its right to enter into closer trade relations with the mother sountry."

That is the promise. Is there any danger of the promise being incurred? Has the case yet arisen? If it has arisen, what are you prepared to do? If it has not arisen, why is the question urgent at the present time? The Prime Minister has expressly said that he is prepared if the contingency arose to secure free exercise of the right. Would he do it by retaliatory measures? Has the Government agreed upon any measure in such a case? Is the Chancellor of the Exchequer prepared to endorse retaliatory measures? What ought to be made clear to the House especially after the speech of the noble Lord, is, when the Prime Minister made this promise had he any idea in his own mind as to what measures he would take, and, if he had an idea, did he speak for himself or for a Government that was agreed upon the question, or had the Government, in making a definite promise to the colonies, any settled policy whatever?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I am quite sure that those Members of the House who were present earlier in the debate will now acquit me of any discourtesy to the right hon. Gentleman opposite in interrupting him as I did on a point of order, with the view of ascertaining from you, Sir, within what limits it would be necessary that this debate should be kept. I have to say, on behalf of the Government, that we welcome discussion on this important matter, but, naturally, we do not desire that the discussion should be confined to one side; and we were anxious to know how far we should be justified in following the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues in replying to a matter which appeared to us to be outside the scope of the Resolution. The Resolution, and all it referred to, has already disappeared in the course of the debate. I have often heard debates raised in this House on a Motion for the adjournment which seemed very difficult to reconcile with the Rule of Order which prescribes that it should refer to a "definite matter of urgent public importance;" but this debate is, of all those that I can recollect in the whole course of my experience, one which has the least foundation, and which, in fact, is only based on what I may call the dialectical pin-point. The Motion, which it is "urgent" and of "public importance" to discuss, is whether or not the New South Wales Government are mistaken in expressing their

"Great satisfaction with the declaration by the British Government that all the self-governing colonies should be secured in the free exercise of the right to enter into closer trade relations with the mother country."

That has been settled by the declaration of the Prime Minister. They are not mistaken. The Prime Minister expressed the opinion of the whole Government. So far as that goes the answer is complete, and the debate might there come to an end. But a great deal more has been raised by the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. I will promise not to go one atom beyond anything which has already been said; but I find it very difficult to understand how some of the things which have been said arise —[Cries of "Order," and an HON. MEMBER: You are not Mr. Speaker.] —upon the terms of the Motion. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Northumberland having received the answer of the Prime Minister and not being satisfied, goes altogether beyond this Motion and puts a Question which I am prepared to answer, but to which I apply what I have just said. He says: Under these circumstances, does the Government contemplate in the future a hostile discrimination which will come within the terms of the minute of the Government of New South Wales that has been communicated to us? Does he consider that up to the present time there has been any hostile discrimination against a self-governing colony which is calculated to prevent the free exercise of its right to enter into closer trade relations with the mother country? Yes, Sir, we do. What has happened? Before I come to that, let me say this. In nothing that I say am I imputing the slightest blame to Germany, the country which has exercised this undoubted right to discriminate. I make no complaint whatever. Under existing circumstances, not only have they a perfect right to do what they have done, but we have no right to consider it as an unfriendly action or to expect any different treatment. So long as the policy of this country is to lie down under that treatment so long we have no complaint either against Germany or against any other nation which treats our colonies in this way.

What are the facts? It is perfectly true that the self-governing colonies claim the right—subject, of course, to exercising it through the Imperial Government—to represent their special views to foreign countries; and, if necessary, I have no doubt they would ask to make special treaties of reciprocity or otherwise. In that sense it is perfectly open to foreign countries to treat them separately. But what has happened in this case is that the greatest of all our colonies has, of its own accord, voluntarily and without any application from us, desired to show its appreciation of the action of the mother country—the value which it attaches to the greatest free market which it enjoys—by giving to us a special preference upon the goods which it imports of our manufacture. Thereupon, in the full exercise of her right, Germany immediately removes Canada from the position in which it was placed as a member of the British Empire, and places it under a different scheme of tariff regulations by which Canadian goods are visited with a much heavier duty in Germany. Germany has a perfect right to do that. Why does she do it? Her papers tell us. Only a few weeks ago every paper in Germany was explaining to the world the policy of Germany, which was to penalise Canada for having given special advantages to the mother country, and to do that not so much or not only to punish Canada but to deter other colonies. The German papers told us in so many words that they saw a proposal for giving a preference of this kind in South Africa, and that they wished to stop it. The method which they suggested as likely to stop it was to place discrimination after discrimination upon the goods coming from Canada; if what they had done already was not sufficient, to increase that discrimination, and thereby, as they hoped, to give very great assistance to those of their friends who in South Africa were protesting against the preference which it was proposed to give there also. They thought that the lesson would be read, in South Africa, in Australia, and in New Zealand, that no British colony would dare to discriminate in favour of the mother country when it was known that Germany would take the course which was indicated in these papers. And then the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Berwick division of Northumberland comes down to the House and asks, with an air of ingenuous ignorance, "Do you know of any hostile discrimination against a British colony?" I say, Yes, we do; and I say we resent it, not in the sense that we make any complaint under existing circumstances, but we resent the policy which makes this possible. The Resolution of the New South Wales Government speaks of the declarations of the British Government, and the Prime Minister of the Colony has said that in referring to the declarations of the British Government he referred to the speeches of my right hon. friend the Prime Minister and myself. What did I say? What I said was this. I stated the facts as I have now stated them to the House; and I said that, so long as our present system continued, the only answer we could make to our colonies, if they complained, would be that our fiscal system prevented us from going to their assistance; and I went on to say that, to my mind, that was a humiliating position. I said I did not like it. I said that as long as it continued I did not believe in the future union of the Empire. I say so now, and the Government has asked for discussion on the question.

The right hon. Baronet rose for the purpose of putting two questions to the Government. He first asked, as I have said, whether any case had arisen. I have answered that question. He then asked whether and how we were going to prevent such cases. He said something about not dealing with hypotheses. It is an hypothesis whether or not we shall have to deal with such a case. I have stated what was the case a few weeks ago. Look at the German papers now. It is, of course, very difficult to understand the cause of the sudden change of opinion. But there can be no doubt about the change. We hear no more in the German papers of further discrimination against our colony of Canada. We see in all of them a recognition of the fact that public opinion in this country is directed to this question and that apparently the patience of this country has been exhausted. I am quoting—I am not giving my own opinion—the effect of articles that have appeared in the leading German Press; and I find, on the one hand, recognition, generous appreciation of our motives, recognition of our right to protect the unity of the British Empire, and, further, the expression of the opinion that if a change in our fiscal policy is involved, then German interests need not be injured thereby, because German policy could be changed to meet it, because Germany would then seek to arrange a *modus vivendi* with us, and we should have something to negotiate with. That is the answer. At the present moment I see no reason whatever to fear that our allies in Germany will put us in the position of having to consider retaliatory measures in consequence of action taken by them against our colony of Canada; but if they do, then I rest upon the statement of the Prime Minister—we should not regard that action with indifference, we should think it our duty to find a remedy. The right hon. Gentleman opposite has shown an extraordinary anxiety in this debate lest the colonies should be disappointed; the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition has also expressed his surprise that the attention of the country should have been called to this matter as one of urgency. Well, Sir, in my present office I ought, at any rate, to have the means of forming a fairly correct judgment of the general trend of opinion in our colonies. If there had been nothing in the condition of our colonies, in the state of opinion in our great self-governing colonies which justified allusion to this matter, I agree in that case there would have been no immediate urgency, and the matter might or might not have been left for a future period sooner or later, immediate necessity not arising.

But is the right hon. Gentleman so behind the times that he knows of no urgency? Is there nothing in the state of opinion in our great self-governing colonies at the present time which makes it essential—which makes it the duty of the Minister representing the colonies—to call attention to this subject? Will he allow me to call his attention to a paragraph in the newspapers? It is to the following effect—

> "The Government of Canada have given notice to the Government of the United States that they are not at present disposed to receive the Commission for the establishment of a Reciprocity Treaty."

What does that mean? That also occurred, curiously enough, within the last few weeks. Now, let me call attention to this fact. Suppose a great colony — not necessarily Canada — suppose a Crown colony such as Jamaica or Trinidad wishes to make a treaty of reciprocity with the United States of America; necessarily the first condition for making a satisfactory treaty is that the colony in question should give preference to the United States over and above any that may be given to British manufacturers; without that it is perfectly clear the United States has no interest in such a treaty. The United States is not likely to give something for nothing, and it would be something if it gave a great advantage to the colony without receiving in return this preference over its greatest competitor. Therefore if Canada is to make a reciprocity treaty with the United States or any other country it must be detrimental to the manufactures of this country. I do not desire to force Canada into such a position. I say that as long as Canada could say, or think, we were indifferent to her offers when she offered us $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent., that we cared not for it when she offered more if we gave her some slight preference in return, and that we rejected her offers with contumely, or, at all events, with indifference—I say I do not want Canada to be in that position and to be forced, as it were, by the public opinion of the country to seek elsewhere for the reciprocal trade which the mother country refused to her. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite are afraid lest the colonies should be disappointed. Sir, the colonies have been disappointed with our policy hitherto. Is it we who raise the question? No, it is they. They raised it, and not one colony alone. Every individual colony raised it by the mouth of its Prime Minister at the recent Conference, when a resolution was unanimously passed asking the Government of His Britannic Majesty to call attention to this matter, to consider the matter, and see if they could not do something to meet the desire of the colonies for this closer commercial union, which in my heart and soul I believe is absolutely essential—if hereafter you are to have that closer federal union I believe to be the real destiny of the British race—and without which the Empire will fall to pieces and separate atoms.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs): I think the Motion of my right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition has been amply justified, were it only for having elicited the speech delivered by the Colonial Secretary. The Colonial Secretary has made two things perfectly clear in that speech. He has made it perfectly clear, first of all, that he adheres to his own opinion, and he has also made it equally clear that the Government has no opinion at all. The Colonial Secretary has declared once more in favour of retaliation and preferential tariffs. But what did he say when he came to make a declaration of the policy of the Government? We are on the question of the message of the New South Wales Premier to this country. That message expresses satisfaction with the declaration of His Majesty's Government. My hon. and learned friend the Member for South Shields has read out the declaration of the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, in which he said that if necessary there shall be retaliatory tariffs. What does the Colonial Secretary, speaking for the Government, say? Here, he says, is Germany, which is threatening retaliation against Canadian goods because that colony has given a preference to this country—but what the Colonial Secretary forgot to say is that that retaliation by Germany is a matter of years. What have His Majesty's Government been doing during the whole of these years? Canada has within the last few months declared war against Germany. The question put by my right hon. friend the Member for Berwick is whether, as a matter of practical policy, the Colonial Secretary and the Government are going to back up Canada in that respect. We are entitled to know. It is not a hypothetical question at all. It is a matter which has arisen as a matter of practical policy. What are the Government asking us to do? They say: "We have got to back up Canada, we must do something to protect the colony, and, therefore, we will fire great speeches at each other." That is the answer. This is the policy of the big revolver to protect the colonies. That is their opinion of protection for the colonies. That is the policy declared by the Colonial Secretary to-night. [An HON. MEMBER: "No."] If it is not, then he has declared on behalf of His Majesty's Government a policy of retaliatory tariffs against Germany. Is that the policy of His Majesty's Government? Hon. Members opposite do not seem to know, and if they do not know how are we possibly to know? The fact of the matter is that the Government have lost their bearings in a fog, and they are appointing a Committee to inquire where they are. A question has been put by my right hon. friend the Member for Berwick which has not been answered by the Government. The Colonial Secretary evaded the whole position. My right hon. friend asked the Prime Minister whether he was prepared to give an opportunity for the discussion of this question in the House of Commons The House of Lords have had an opportunity, and they have discussed the question on its merits. I think we are entitled to an answer to the question of my right hon. friend whether the Government are prepared to extend the same privilege to the House of Commons, as the House of Lords have already enjoyed, of discussing this great question. It is more a matter for the House of Commons than the House of Lords. It is a matter of finance; it is a matter of our fiscal policy which, according to the traditions of Parliament, are concerns of this House. I trust that, if we do not get an answer to the question to-night from the Government, the Leader of the Opposition will press for an answer to-morrow.

Question put.

House divided:—Ayes, 132; Noes, 252. (Division List, No. 121.)

AYES.

Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Allen, Charles P. (*Glouc., Stroud*
Asher, Alexander
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Barlow, John Emmott
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Bayley, Thomas (*Derbyshire*)
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.
Bell, Richard
Black, Alexander William
Bolton, Thomas Dolling

Brand, Hon. Arthur G.
Broadhurst, Henry
Bryce, Right Hon. James
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, John
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Causton, Richard Knight

Cawley, Frederick
Channing, Francis Allston
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*
Crombie, John William
Crooks, William
Davies, M. Vaughan- (*Cardign*
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Duncan, J. Hastings
Edwards, Frank
Emmott, Alfred

Evans, Sir F. H. (*Maidstone*)
Evans, Saml. T. (*Glamorgan*)
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (*Leith*
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Fuller, J. M. F.
Furness, Sir Christopher
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Grant, Corrie
Grey, Rt. Hn. Sir E. (*Berwick*
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hardie, J. Keir (*Merthyr Tyd*
Harmsworth, R. Leicester
Harwood, George
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Hemphill, Rt. Hon Chas. H.
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (*Bristl, E*
Holland, Sir William Henry
Horniman, Frederick John
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Hutton, Alfred E. (*Morley*)
Joicey, Sir James
Jones, William (*Carnarv'nshire*
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kitson, Sir James
Labouchere, Henry
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (*Cornwall*)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (*Accrington*)
Leigh, Sir Joseph
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, David
Lough, Thomas
M'Kenna, Reginald
M'Laren, Sir Charles Benj.
Mansfield, Horace Rendall
Mellor, Rt. Hn. John William
Morley, Charles (*Breconshire*)
Morley, Rt. Hn. John (*Montrose*
Moulton, John Fletcher
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Norman, Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, K. (*Tipperary, Mid*)
Paulton, James Mellor
Philipps, John Wynford
Pirie, Duncan V.
Price, Robert John
Priestley, Arthur
Rea, Russell
Reid, Sir R. Threshie (*Dumfr*
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)
Robson, William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (*Cleveland*)
Samuel, S. M. (*Whitechapel*)
Schwann, Charles E.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Thomas (*Hawick, B.*)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Stevenson, Francis S.
Taylor, Theo. C. (*Radcliffe*)
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, Sir A. (*Glam., E.*)
Thomas, David Alfred (*Merthyr*
Thomas, F. Freeman (*Hastings*)
Thomas, J. A. (*Glam., Gower*)
Thomson, F. W. (*York, W. R.*)
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Walton, J. Lawson (*Leeds, S.*)
Walton, Joseph (*Barnsley*)
Wason, E. (*Clackmannan*)
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Williams, Osmond (*Merioneth*)
Wilson, H. J. (*York, W. R.*)
Wilson, John (*Durham, Mid*)
Wilson, J. W. (*Worcester., N.*)
Woodhouse, Sir J T (*Huddersf'd*
Young, Samuel
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Herbert Gladstone and Mr. William M'Arthur.

NOES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Allhusen, Aug. Henry Eden
Allsopp, Hon. George
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bain Colonel, James Robert
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Man'r*
Balfour, Kenneth R. (*Christch*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bhownaggree, Sir M. M.
Bignold, Arthur
Bigwood, James
Bill, Charles
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Bousfield, William Robert
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Brown, Sir Alx. H. (*Shropsh.*)
Brymer, William Ernest
Bull, William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, John George
Campbell, J. H. M. (*Dublin Univ*
Carlile, William Walter
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cavendish, V. C. W. (*Derbyshire*
Cayzer, Sir Charles William
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. (*Birm.*
Chamberlain, Rt Hn. J. A (*Worc*
Chapman, Edward
Charrington, Spencer
Clare, Octavius Leigh
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Collings, Right Hon. Jesse
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Colston, Chas. Edw H. Athole
Cook, Sir Frederick Lucas
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cox, Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Cranborne, Lord
Cripps, Charles Alfred
Cross, Alexander (*Glasgow*)
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Crossley, Sir Savile
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Denny, Colonel
Dewar, Sir T. R. (*Tr. Haml'ts*
Dickinson, Robert Edmond
Dickson, Charles Scott
Digby, John K. D. Wingfield-
Dimsdale, Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph C.
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph
Dorington, Rt. Hon. Sir J. E.
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hn. Sir William Hart
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Firbank, Sir Joseph Thomas
Fisher, William Hayes
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S. W.*
Fyler, John Arthur
Garfit, William
Gibbs, Hn A. G. H (*City of Lond*
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nrn*
Gordon, J. (*Londonderry, S.*)
Gore, Hn G. R. C. Ormsby- (*Salop*
Gore, Hon. S. F. Ormsby- (*Linc.*)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gray, Ernest (*West Ham*)
Greene, Sir E. W. (*Bury St. Ed.*
Greene, Hy. D. (*Shrewsbury*)
Groves, James Grimble
Hain, Edward
Hall, Edward Marshall
Halsey, Rt. Hon. Thomas F.
Hamilton, Rt Hn Lord G (*Midd'x*
Hamilton, Marq of (*L'nd'nderry*
Hardy, Laurence (*Kent, Ashfd*
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Haslam, Sir Alfred S.
Hatch, Ernest Frederick G.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heath, Arthur H. (*Hanley*)
Heaton, John Henniker

Helder, Augustus
Henderson, Sir Alexander
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hickman, Sir Alfred
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., Bt'side.*)
Hornby, Sir William Henry
Horner, Frederick William
Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry
Hoult, Joseph
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Hutton, John (*Yorks, N.R.*)
Jebb, Sir Richard Claverhouse
Jeffreys, Rt. Hn. Arthur Fred
Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
Johnstone, Heywood
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir John H.
Kennedy, Patrick James
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Kerr, John
Keswick, William
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*)
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (*Monm'th*)
Lawson, John Grant (*Yorks. N R*
Lee, A. H. (*Hants, Fareham*)
Lees, Sir Elliott (*Birkenhead*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Llewellyn, Evan Henry
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long, Col. Chas. W. (*Evesham*
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (*Bristol, S*
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Francis William
Lowther, C. (*Cumb. Eskdale*)
Loyd, Archie Kirkman
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*
Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
Macdona, John Cumming
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
M'Iver, Sir Lewis (*Edinb'rgh, W*
Majendie, James A. H.
Malcolm, Ian
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Maxwell, Rt Hn Sir H. E (*Wigt'n*
Melville, Beresford Valentine
Milvain, Thomas
Mitchell, Edw. (*Fermanagh, N.*
Mitchell, William (*Burnley*)
Molesworth, Sir Lewis
Montagu, G. (*Huntingdon*)
Montagu, Hon. J. Scott (*Hants.*)
Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
More, Robt. Jasper (*Shropshire*)
Morgan, David J (*Walthamst'w*
Morgan, Hn. F. (*Monm'thsh.*)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Murray, Charles J. (*Coventry*)
Myers, William Henry
Newdegate, Francis A. N.
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Parker, Sir Gilbert
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pemberton, John S. G.
Percy, Earl
Pilkington, Lt.-Col. Richard
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Plummer, Walter R.
Pretyman, Ernest George
Purvis, Robert
Randles, John S.
Rattigan, Sir William Henry
Reid, James (*Greenock*)
Remnant, Jas. Farquharson
Renwick, George
Ritchie, Rt Hon Chas. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Robinson, Brooke
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rothschild, Hon. Lionel Walter
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Sadler, Col. Saml. Alexander
Sandys, Lt.-Col. Thos. Myles
Saunderson, Rt. Hn. Col. E. J.
Scott, Sir S. (*Marylebone, W.*)
Seely, Charles Hilton (*Lincoln*)
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*
Sinclair, Louis (*Romford*)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Abel H. (*Hertford, E.*)
Smith, H. C (*North'mb. Tyneside*
Smith, James Parker (*Lanarks.*
Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (*Strand*)
Stanley, Hon. A. (*Ormskirk*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stewart, Sir M. J. M'Taggart
Stock, James Henry
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Stroyan, John
Strutt, Hon. Charles Hedley
Thompson, Dr E C (*Monagh'n, N*
Thorburn, Sir Walter
Thornton, Percy M.
Tollemache, Henry James
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw. M.
Tritton, Charles Ernest
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Vincent, Col Sir C. E. H (*Sheffield*
Walker, Col. William Hall
Wanklyn, James Leslie
Warde, Colonel C. E.
Webb, Col. William George
Welby, Lt.-Col A. C. E (*Taunton*
Welby, Sir Chas. G. E. (*Notts*)
Wharton, Rt. Hon. J. Lloyd
Willox, Sir John Archibald
Wilson, John (*Glasgow*)
Wilson-Todd, Wm. H. (*Yorks.*)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R (*Bath*)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Worsley-Taylor, Hry. Wilson
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Wylie, Alexander
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

IRISH LAND BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:—

*MR. DUKE (Plymouth) said he rose to move an Amendment which, while retaining the zones, which he thought were to be regarded as the prime characteristic of the Bill, would place in the hands of the Land Commission to be appointed under the Bill the power to extend the benefits of the measure in exceptional cases to classes of tenants of land in Ireland which were, as the Bill stood, prohibited from receiving its benefits. He proposed to add at the end of Sub-section (a) the following proviso: "Or if it will be more than thirty per cent., and the Land Commission are satisfied upon inquiry that the purchase price does not unduly affect the interests of the person entitled to the first estate in tail in remainder expectant on the estate of the vendor at the time of the proposed sale or any other remainderman or incumbrancer."

Amendment proposed—

"In Page 1, line 23, after the word "ten" to insert the words "Per cent. below the existing rent, but will be more than thirty per cent. below the existing rent, and the Land Commission are satisfied upon inquiry that the purchase price does not unduly affect the interests of the person entitled to the first estate in tail in remainder expectant on the estate of the vendor at the time of the proposed sale or any other remainderman or incumbrancer." (*Mr. Duke.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. WYNDHAM suggested that it might be more convenient if his hon. friend were to move his Amendment when they came to discuss Sub-section (b). If the hon Member were successful in carrying this proviso, he would require to move another proviso on Sub-section (b), and the whole of the first Clause would then have to be re-cast on the Report stage.

*Mr. DUKE said he thought it would be better if the right hon. Gentleman would draft a proviso in the direction of the one contained in his Amendment, and submit it to the Committee at the next sitting when the Irish Land Bill was under discussion?

Mr. WYNDHAM said as there was now only less than half an hour for discussion, he did not think it would be at all proper to enter into the merits of the hon. Member's proposal. It would be only half an hour wasted.

*Mr. DUKE said that under the circumstances, and in the interest of the progress of the Bill, he asked leave to withdraw his Amendment for the present.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND moved another Amendment. The purpose of this Amendment, he said, was to increase the minimum reduction of the first-term rents, just as he had already moved the increase of the minimum in the second-term rents.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 28, to leave out the word 'twenty,' and insert the word 'twenty-five.'" (*Mr. John Redmond.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'twenty' stand part of the clause."

Mr. WYNDHAM said that he must oppose the Amendment on the same grounds as he had urged in the case of the Amendment on the second-term rents. The object of having a minimum reduction was to give security to the taxpayer; and as long as they were satisfied that no bargain entered into between landlord and tenant would be prejudicial to the taxpayer, the Government held, rightly or wrongly, that the greater the latitude the better.

Mr. DILLON said that the right hon. Gentleman alleged that he desired to give the utmost possible liberty for bargaining; but it was a very curious thing that that liberty was always in favour of the landlord, and when it was proposed to extend that liberty in favour of the tenants, then the Government was all against liberty. This was only another illustration of the extreme mischief of the limits in this clause. He wished to point out to the right hon. Gentleman that this Amendment raised two vitally important questions totally different from those raised by the Amendment on the second-term rents. In the first place, since the first-term rents were settled, there had been an important alteration in the law by the Act of 1896, which had improved the position of the tenantry of Ireland. The Committee should remember that first-term tenants were different from second-term tenants. The right hon. Gentleman said that the basis of the Bill was rent ascertained by a Court; but that was precisely what the right hon. Gentleman was not now proposing. He maintained that the limits as at present fixed in the Bill with regard to first-term tenants would have the effect of making the tenant, as had often happened before in the history of land purchase, pay for his own improvements in hard cash. There was another important point in which the case of the first-term tenants differentiated from that of the second-term tenants. Hon. Members would notice, on referring to the Bill, that as regarded the two classes of tenants there was only a difference of 10 per cent. in the limits fixed for each. The right hon. Gentleman and many hon. Members opposite were in the habit, during the debate, of referring to what were called Conference terms; but the provision in the Conference Report which appeared to him to be most vital in the interests of the tenants was that the whole system of purchase should be based on second-term rents or their fair equivalent. That meant that before the price of a holding held under a first-term rent was calculated, a fair equivalent to a second-term rent should first be ascertained. There were two ways of doing that. One was to submit the rent of the holding to a judicial inquiry; and the other was to apply to that holding the average reduction obtained all over

Ireland on first-term rents, namely, 22 per cent. If justice were to be done to the first-term tenants the limits ought to be 22 per cent. greater than in the case of second-term tenants. In that case the limits would work out at about 30 per cent. and 50 per cent. instead of at 20 per cent. and 40 per cent as in the Bill. That was a bare statement of the justice of the case.

He objected to the principle altogether; and unless the limits were very much extended, he would vote against the clause. There was another alternative. A first-term holding might be inspected by the Land Commission, who would estimate what a fair second-term rent would be, and the purchase price could be calculated on that. That was a procedure which was actually in force at present, because sales under the 40th Section were carried out in that way. The holding was inspected by the Land Commission, who reported what a fair price would be to the Judge of the Landed Estates Court, and the price was based on that. He did not put that forward, however, as an alternative he would recommend. because undoubtedly it would lead to delay, and he did not think it would be quite as fair to the tenants as an investigation in open Court, because in most private investigations the improvements of the tenants were commonly overlooked and ignored. His proposal was that the purchase price should be based in the case of first-term holdings on a fair equivalent to what a second-term rent would be. The surest guide they had to that was the general average reduction obtained throughout Ireland. Further, there might be the right of appeal if either the landlord or the tenant thought he was hardly treated. What he wished to impress upon the Chief Secretary was that this was not a matter to be dismissed perfunctorily. It raised most important considerations; and there was no doubt whatever that the limits as they stood in the Bill would place the first-term tenants at a very great disadvantage.

MR. WYNDHAM said he had no intention of dismissing the matter perfunctorily, nor did he contend that first-term rents should be treated on an analogy with second-term rents. What he would say was that with respect to the minimum reduction, the Government held, rightly or wrongly, that all they had to consider was the security of the taxpayer. It was notorious that the standard on which first-term rents were fixed in the early stages of land legislation differed from the standard on which rents were fixed after 1887. The hon. Gentleman suggested that the general average reduction all over the country should be taken; but that would be a very cumbrous proceeding, and would involve delay.

MR. HARRINGTON said that, of course, the question of the security of the State was of importance as long as it was directed towards the reduction which the tenant would obtain; but the moment a sale was enforced the question of the security of the State went by the board. If the reduction which the tenant could obtain was increased from 20 per cent. to 30 per cent. the security he would be able to offer to the State would be proportionately greater. He thought it would be a very cumbrous system to give the Land Commission power to hear first-term cases. If such cases were to be heard at all, there would have to be the right of appeal, and he did not know where it would end. He repudiated the idea that the proposal in the Bill was in any way a fair equivalent to second-term rents, as proposed by the Land Conference. The language used at the Conference Report was advisedly vague; but the Confer- had before it the average reduction all over the country, and it was hoped that there would not be any doubt as to the meaning of a fair equivalent of a second-term rent.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said that undoubtedly the Land Commission had, since 1887, taken into account the fall in prices which they had not taken into account previously. What he desired to point out was that there had been no effort on the part of the Government to carry out the proposal in the Land Conference Report that there should be a fair equivalent to second-term rents. So far as the Conference terms applied in favour of the landlords they had been followed, but where they would apply in favour of the tenants they had been ignored. That was really what had taken place, and there was no use in attempting to disguise it. His right hon friend the Attorney-General for Ireland would remember that the policy of Irish land legislation, with regard to improvements, was reversed by the Court of Appeal in 1882 in the case of Adams *v.* Dunseath, and for fourteen years rents were fixed on a totally false idea as to improvements. So false was that idea that the House of Commons reversed the policy of the Court of Appeal in 1896 but millions of money had, in the meantime, been taken from the tenants and given to the landlords by that decision. The Government in this Bill did not take the slightest interest in the case of those tenants; and to effect a settlement in those cases it was the duty of the Government to try, at all events, and get a fair equivalent to second-term rents. The case of those tenants whose rents should be very much reduced on the question of improvements alone should not be passed over. This question was more serious than the question of second-term rents. There were 250,000 first-term holdings in Ireland; and he was not sure, considering the importance of the question, that the Committee should pass away from it to-night. It affected such a large number of tenants that the Committee ought to be permitted to consider it further.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND said several of his hon. friends desired a further opportunity of discussing the matter, and he suggested that Progress should now be reported. He asked the Chief Secretary if he could put on the Paper his proposed proviso or new clause dealing with non-judicial tenants before they took up the discussion of the Bill again.

Mr. WYNDHAM said he thought the hon. Gentleman attached undue importance to the new clause, which, however, he should be glad to put on the Paper before the discussion was resumed. He would accept the hon. Gentleman's Motion to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress; and ask leave to sit again." — (*Mr. John Redmond.*) Put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

MILITARY LANDS BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported; as amended, to be considered upon Thursday, 25th June.

THE CANADIAN PACIFIC MAIL CONTRACT.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.) formally moved that the contract with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, dated 12th October, 1901, for the conveyance of mails, troops, and stores between Halifax and Hong Kong for the period between 7th April, 1901, and 6th April, 1906, be approved.

Mr. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) expressed the hope that the Postmaster General would take the first opportunity open to him of terminating this contract.

POST OFFICE (HALIFAX (OR QUEBEC) AND HONG KONG MAIL CONTRACT).

Resolved, That the Contract with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, dated the 12th day of October, 1901, for the conveyance of His Majesty's mails, troops, and stores between Halifax (or Quebec) and Hong Kong, for the period from the 7th day of April, 1901, to the 6th day of April, 1906, printed in Parliamentary Paper, No. 21, of Session 1902, be approved.—(*Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*)

POOR PRISONERS DEFENCE BILL.

Ordered, That Mr. Arkwright and Mr. Nussey be added to the Select Committee on the Poor Prisoners Defence Bill.—(*Sir Alexander Acland-Hood*).

HOUSE OF COMMONS (VENTILATION).

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the ventilation of the House.

Mr. Dillon, Dr. Farquharson, Sir Michael Foster, Mr. Goddard, Sir J. Batty Tuke, Mr. A. H. Smith, and Mr. Victor Cavendish were accordingly nominated members of the Committee.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Sir Alexander Acland-Hood.*)

Adjourned at five minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 18th June, 1903.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with: Scottish Ontario and Manitoba Land Company [H.L.]; Dover Corporation; Merthyr Tydfil Urban District Council.

Also the Certificates that no Standing Orders are applicable to the following Bills; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 12); Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 14); Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law).

Also the Certificate that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with: Wigan Corporation Tramways.

Also the Certificates that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with: Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 10); Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 16).

And also the Certificate that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with: South-Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway [H.L.]—(Petition for additional Provision).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Plymouth Corporation Bill; Report from His Majesty's Attorney-General received, and ordered to lie on the Table.

New Hunstanton Improvement Bill; The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn: The orders made on the 26th of May last and the 15th instant discharged, and Bill committed for Tuesday next.

Wood Green Urban District Council Bill; Committed: The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Gas Light and Coke Company Bill. Reported, with an Amendment.

Ipswich Gas Bill; Bournemouth Gas and Water Bill [H.L.]; Great Eastern Railway Bill; Nelson Corporation Bill. Reported, with Amendments.

South Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway Bill [H.L.] (Petition for additional provision); Wigan Corporation Tramways Bill. Examiner's Certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Tuesday next.

West Cumberland Electric Tramways Bill. Read 2ª, and committed.

Seaforth and Sefton Junction Railway Bill. Read 2ª, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland Bill. Read 2ª, and committed.

Middlesbrough Corporation Bill. Read 2ª, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Lanarkshire and Dumbartonshire Railway Bill; South Yorkshire Joint Railways Bill. Read 2ª, and committed.

Wolverhampton and Cannock Chase Railway (Extension of Time) Bill. Read 2ª, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Great Southern and Western Railway Bill. Read 2ª, and committed.

Mullingar, Kells, and Drogheda Railway Bill. Read 2ª, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Plymouth Corporation Bill. Read 2ª, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Woolwich Borough Council Bill; Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway (Various Powers) Bill. Read 2ª, and committed.

Great Western Railway Bill. Read 2ª, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Hainault Forest Bill. Read 2ª, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

London County Council (Money) Bill. Read 2ª, and committed.

Neath, Pontardawe, and Brynaman Railway Bill. Read 2ª, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

North-Eastern Railway Bill. Read 2ª, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection

Merthyr Tydfil Urban District Council Bill. Read 2ª.

Blackheath and Greenwich District Electric Light Bill. Read 2ª, and committed.

Scottish Ontario and Manitoba Land Company Bill [H.L.]; Dover Corporation Bill. Read 2ª.

Derby Gas Bill [H.L.]. Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]; Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]. Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.]. Amendments reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No 10) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 12) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 14) Bill; Local Government Provisional Order (No. 16) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) Bill. Read 2ª (according to Order).

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill. Amendments reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill. House in Committee (according to Order): Bill reported without Amendment: Standing Committee negatived, and Bill to be read 3ª to morrow.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 11) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (Gas) Bill. Read 2ª (according to Order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 8) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (Housing of the Working Classes) Bill. Read 2ª (according to Order) and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE REPORTS—ANNUAL SERIES.

No. 2996. Brazil (Porto-Alegre).
No. 2997. Russia (Odessa).
No. 2998. Germany (Hamburg).
No. 2999. China (Newchwang).
No. 3000. Japan (South Formosa).

ALLOWANCES TO WITNESSES IN CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS.

Report of the Departmental Committee appointed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department to inquire into the allowances to prosecutors and witnesses in criminal prosecutions; with evidence and appendices.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

INDIA (LOANS RAISED IN INDIA).

Return of all loans raised in India chargeable on the revenues of India outstanding at the commencement of the half year ended the 31st March, 1903, with the rates of interest and total amount payable thereon, etc.

SUPERANNUATION.

Treasury Minute, dated the 12th June, 1903, declaring that Frank Parham, Royal Laboratory Department, War Office, was appointed without a

Civil Service certificate, through inadvertence on the part of the head of his department.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Leave given to the Joint Committee to hear parties interested by themselves, their counsel, agents, and witnesses, so far as the Committee think fit. The evidence taken before the Joint Committee from time to time to be printed, but no copies to be delivered except to members of the Committee, and to such other persons as the Committee shall think fit, until further order. (No. 118.)

NEW BILL.

ROYAL DECLARATION BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to abolish the declaration required to be made by the Sovereign on his Accession was presented by the Earl Grey; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Thursday next. (No. 119.)

NAVAL WORKS PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Read 2ª (according to Order), and committed to a Committee of the whole House to-morrow.

MUSICAL COPYRIGHT BILL [H.L.].

Amendments reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

STATUTE LAW REVISION (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE BILL [H.L.].

Amendments reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

COAL MINES (CERTIFICATES) BILL.

Amendment reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 18th June, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Midland Railway Bill. Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to.

South Shields Corporation Bill. As amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time.

STANDING ORDERS.

Ordered, That so much of Standing Order 91 as fixes five as the quorum of the Select Committee on Standing Orders be read and suspended.

Ordered, That, for the remainder of the session, three be the quorum of the Committee.—(*Mr. Halsey.*)

Alexandra Park and Palace [Petition for Bill]. Ordered, That Standing Order 70 be suspended, and that the Examiners have leave to sit and proceed to-morrow.—(*Mr. Caldwell.*)

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill. Read the third time and passed.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS.

The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means.

Hove, Worthing, and District Tramways Bill [Lords]. Report [16th June] from the Select Committee on Standing Orders read.

Bill to be read a second time.—(*Mr. Caldwell.*)

Military Lands Provisional Orders Bill. Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow.

Local Government Provisional Order (No. 18) Bill. Reported with Amendments [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill. Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

Hamilton Burgh Provisional Order Bill. Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow.

Broughty Ferry Gas Provisional Order Bill. Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow.

Ulster and Connaught Light Railways Bill; Belfast Water Bill [Lords]; Shepshed Urban District Gas Bill [Lords]; Scunthorpe Urban District Water Bill [Lords]; Southampton Harbour Bill [Lords]. Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill. Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Order relating to county of Dublin not confirmed. Remaining Orders confirmed]. [Title Amended]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

Croydon and District Electric Tramways Bill. Harrow Road and Paddington Tramways Bill. Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP NO. 10.)

Sir Edward Strachey reported from the Committee on Group No. 10 of Railway Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Monday next, at half past Eleven of the clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to—Local Government Provisional Order (Housing of the Working Classes) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill, without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to make further provision with respect to the arrangement of Polling Districts for the election of County Councillors." [Polling Districts (County Councils) Bill (Lords).]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to Amend the Law relating to the Arrangement of Polling Districts in Parliamentary Boroughs. [Polling Arrangements (Parliamentary Boroughs) (Lords).]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for incorporating and conferring powers on the Carmarthenshire Electric Power Company." [Carmarthenshire Electric Power Bill (Lords).]

Carmarthenshire Electric Power Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

BRITISH AND IRISH MEAT PROTECTION BILL.

Petition from Battersea, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

BURGH POLICE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Perth, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.

Petitions against: from Tottenham; London (two); Manchester; Holborn; Balham; Reading; and Kingston-on-Thames; to lie upon the Table.

COAL MINES REGULATION BILL.

Petition from Weig Fawr, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

COTTAGE HOMES BILL.

Petition from Battersea, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LAND TRANSFER ACT, 1897.

Petition from Kensington and other Metropolitan Boroughs, for inquiry into the compulsory system of registration; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL.

Petitions against: from Willaston; and Finsbury; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL, AND LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.

Petition from London, against; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.

Petitions against: from Inverurie; Willaston; Clydebank; Lerwick; Finsbury; and High Wycombe; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petitions for alteration: from Inverurie; and Dalmarnock; to lie upon the Table.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.

Petitions against: from London; and Bishop Auckland; to lie upon the Table.

MERCHANDISE MARKS BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Leicester (two); and Alexandria; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

Two Petitions from Leek, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

PURCHASE OF LAND (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition from Battersea, against; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE DISPUTES BILL.

Petition from Weig Fawr, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EAST INDIA (LOANS RAISED IN INDIA).

Copy presented, of Return of all Loans raised in India, chargeable on the Revenues of India, outstanding at the commencement of the half-year ending on the 31st March, 1903, etc. [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 210.]

CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS (ALLOWANCES) (DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE).

Copy presented, of Report of the Departmental Committee appointed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department to inquire into the Allowances to Prosecutors and Witnesses in Criminal Prosecutions, with Evidence and Appendices [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANKS.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 11th June—*Mr. Mount*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 211.]

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1884.

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 12th June, 1903, declaring that Frank Parham, Royal Laboratory, War Office, was appointed without a Civil Service Certificate through inadvertence on the part of the Head of his Department [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA (INDIA OFFICE, RETIREMENT AT 65).

Address for "Return of Copy of Minute by the Secretary of State for India, stating the circumstances under which a member of his permanent establishment has been retained in the Service after he has attained the age of sixty-five."—(*Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Irish Lights Board—Salaries of Staff.

COLONEL McCALMONT (Antrim, E.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware of the discrepancy in the salaries of the clerical staff of the Commissioners of Irish Lights as compared with those of the Trinity House, the minimum of the salaries of first-class clerks in the Trinity House being £50 a year in excess of the maximum of the Irish, and the maximum is £200 in advance, while the annual increment of the Irish scale is only half that of the English, and even 33 per cent. less than that of the English second class; and, if so, whether he will take steps to make inquiries with the view of remedying this state of things.

(*Answered by Mr. Bonar Law.*) The Board of Trade are aware that the scales of salaries in the Trinity House and the Office of the Irish Lights Commissioners are not identical. Various applications from the Irish Lights Commissioners on behalf of the members of their staff are before the Department, and these will receive due consideration on their merits.

Transference of Ancient Wills from Somerset House to the Record Office.

MR. VICARY GIBBS (Hertfordshire, St. Albans): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will consider the advisability of transferring from Somerset House to the Record Office ancient wills which possess only a literary interest, in view of the lack of facilities offered for research in their present situation.

(*Answered by Mr. Elliot.*) I am informed that, in view of the terms of Section 66 of the Probate Act of 1857, legislation would be necessary in order to carry out the transfer of such wills to the Record Office; and, after communication with the President of the Probate Division, I do not think that any serious inconvenience is caused to literary searchers by the present arrangements.

Annual Leave of Customs Assistant Clerks.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will explain on what grounds the Treasury has refused to accede to the recommendation of the Board of Customs that the annual leave of their assistant clerks engaged upon checking duties should be increased to eighteen days, seeing that in the majority of Government offices assistant clerks are given either eighteen or twenty-one days.

(*Answered by Mr. Elliot.*) I must refer the hon. Member to the answer given to his Question of 23rd July last year† by my predecessor in office, which answer was in the following words—"The annual leave of assistant clerks has been fixed at a maximum of fourteen working days, exclusive of bank holidays and the King's birthday, for the Treasury and its subordinate Departments. There is no general Order in Council regulating their leave, but in the opinion of the Treasury it would be highly desirable that other Departments of Government should adopt this scale." I have nothing to add to this answer.

Election of Income Tax Commissioners.

MR. J. H. LEWIS (Flint Boroughs): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will say what steps are now taken to summon the Commissioners of Land Tax to meetings held for the election of Commissioners of Income Tax.

(*Answered by Mr. Elliot.*) Vacancies among the Commissioners of Income Tax are supplied from a list of persons qualified to act kept by the Clerk to the Commissioners. When it becomes necessary to renew this list, the Board of Inland Revenue, upon receiving from the clerk a notification to that effect, causes a notice to be inserted in the *London Gazette*, convening for this purpose a meeting of the Commissioners of Land Tax for the county. A letter is then addressed to the clerk informing him that the notice will be inserted, and a copy of the *Gazette* containing it sent him in due course. In this letter it is now the practice (adopted in 1901 on the suggestion of the hon. Member and some of his friends), for the Commissioners of Inland Revenue to request the clerk to take the necessary steps to ensure a full attendance by giving notice of the time and place of meeting to all Commissioners of Land Tax residing in or near the division who are entitled to vote. For this latter purpose a printed circular is supplied by the Board of Inland Revenue if the Clerk to the Commissioners so desire. So far as the Board of Inland Revenue is aware, compliance with the above request is general.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxi., 1008.

Telegraph Clerks and Postal Duties.

MR. BELL (Derby): To ask the Postmaster-General whether a telegraphist possessing dual qualifications and in receipt of his maximum pay will be called upon periodically to perform duties in the postal department; and whether he will state upon what conditions a telegraphist may cancel the qualifying certificate when he is no longer in receipt of the increment for postal knowledge.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) The Question does not admit of an answer being given in general terms. If any individual officer desires information on his own case he should apply through the usual channel.

Salaries of Telegraph Clerks in the Central Telegraph Office, London.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: To ask the Postmaster-General whether he will state the number of telegraph clerks in the Central Telegraph Office, London, who are in receipt of £160 per annum; whether he will state the years of service of the senior and junior telegraphists at this point, with the number of men who were transferred from the £160 scale to the £190 scale during the past twelve months.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) Three hundred and sixty-seven telegraphists in the Central Telegraph Office are in receipt of £160 per annum. Of this number twenty-nine have been passed over as ineligible for promotion to the class above. The senior of these has had thirty-three years service. The service of the senior telegraphist eligible for promotion is twenty-six years, and of the junior in receipt of £160, 20 years. Twenty-nine men have been promoted to the class of overseers and senior telegraphists during the year ended 17th June.

Candidates for Posts as Male Learners in the Post Office.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: To ask the Postmaster-General whether he will state the number of candidates who entered for the last open competition for male learners in London with the marks of the highest and lowest successful candidates, and the number of vacancies competed for; will he also state the number of vacancies filled by the last limited competition among messengers, with the marks of the highest and lowest successful candidates.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) One hundred and sixty-five candidates competed at the last open competition for male learners in London, held in February, 1903, for forty places. The highest successful candidate obtained 1,646 marks and the lowest 1,334. Fifteen places were reserved for the limited competition among messengers held on the same date, and the highest and lowest marks obtained by the successful candidates were 1,528 and 1,342 respectively.

Ilford Sorting Office—Sanitary Condition.

MR. LOUIS SINCLAIR (Essex, Romford): To ask the Postmaster-General if he can state what has been the result of his inquiry as to the state of the lavatory accommodation and the sanitary condition of the Ilford sorting office.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) I have made arrangements for the construction of sanitary conveniences at the temporary sorting office at Ilford; in other respects the sanitary condition of the room is satisfactory.

Average Cost per annum of Soldiers in India.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for India what is the cost per annum, respectively, of a private of the cavalry, artillery, and infantry in India.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) The full details required for answering the hon. Member's Question are not in my possession, but I will ask the Government of India to supply them.

Coal Tax—Fraudulent Evasions.

MR. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in consequence of the discovery of evasions of the coal tax, any changes are contemplated in connection with the collection of this branch of revenue; and, if so, is he in a position to state the nature of such changes.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) No such changes are contemplated, but of course the Customs authorities always take precautions against any method of fraudulent evasion which is brought to their notice.

Corn Tax—Rebates.

MR. CAWLEY (Lancashire, Prestwich): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, under the Finance Bill, a merchant holding grain and glucose on which together an amount of duty of £25 has been paid will have the same returned, or will he have to prove that he has paid £25 of duty on each article.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) Stocks of grain and imported glucose must be made the subject of separate claims for rebate under the Finance Bill, and a merchant holding stocks of both will have to prove that he has paid duty of an aggregate amount of not less than £25in respect of the grain, and excess duty amounting to not less than £25 in respect of the glucose before he will be entitled to rebate.

Expenditure of Agricultural and Technical Instruction Rate in County Leitrim.

COLONEL MCCALMONT: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a special rate of 1d. in the £, amounting to between £500 and £600 a year, has been levied on the county Leitrim for the last three years for the purposes of the Agricultural and Technical Instruction Act, and that less than £100 of these sums has been expended in the county for the purposes of the Act; and, if so, will he say whether steps can be taken to prevent the County Council levying rates from which no benefit is derived.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) A special rate of 1d. in the £ was levied in Leitrim in each of the years mentioned. The expenditure in connection with agricultural schemes in the county for the years 1901 and 1902 amounted to £759 17s. 7d., of which the sum of £338 16s. 9d. was borne by the rates. The estimated expenditure on agricultural schemes in the year 1903 is £992 18s., of which amount £441 6s. will be payable out of the rates. As regards technical instruction in the county, there was no scheme in operation during the session 1901–2, and the actual expenditure under that head was only £7 5s. 6d. For the session 1902-3, the expenditure up to the 14th January, 1903, was £196 3s. 9d. The technical instruction scheme is now in full operation, and the additional liabilities which have accrued since 14th January last, and which probably exceed a total of £300, were to have been discharged at the meeting of the County Committee of agriculture and technical instruction on the 15th instant. The County Council has transferred to the Committee the full local contribution, £150, for the Session 1901–2, and a sum of £50 on account of the Session 1902–3. The Department has accordingly paid its full contribution for 1901–2—viz., £300, and one-third, £100, of its contribution for 1902–3, besides £103 14s. 1d. for equipment, making in all £503 14s. 1d. for technical instruction.

Construction of a Bridge at Coolavin, County Sligo.

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to the resolution of the Sligo County Council dated 9th May, 1903, relative to the construction of a bridge over the Cutt at Cull in Coolavin, county Sligo; and, if so, whether this matter will be considered by the Congested Districts Board, seeing that it concerns the counties of Sligo and Roscommon.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The Resolution has been received and will be considered by the Board at its next meeting.

Disturbance at Johnstown, Waterford.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that in Johnstown, Waterford, on the 8th inst., two women members of the Salvation Army were attacked in the public street, and that the police present refused to interfere; and, if so, will he state what action, if any, the Government propose to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) No such occurrence took place on the 8th instant. On the 16th May, however, two Members of the Salvation Army were assaulted (but not seriously) by a woman, who has been previously convicted of assault on her neighbours. The police were not present on the occasion, and both of the ladies assaulted have declined to prosecute their assailant.

Army Officers—Proficiency in Japanese.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether any monetary reward is given for proficiency in Japanese; and why officers are not permitted to earn rewards for proficiency in Chinese and Japanese after having passed in both languages at the end of a single period of seconded service.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) A reward is given for proficiency in the Japanese language on the same lines as for Chinese. The conditions of the grants include a twelve months residence in the country concerned, and it is not possible for an officer to spend the same twelve months simultaneously in China and Japan.

Somaliland Operations.

MR. FULLER (Wiltshire, Westbury): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has yet received General Manning's Report upon the recent operations in Somaliland; and, if so, whether he has any further information to give to the House.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) I have no further information to give to the House on this subject, but despatches will shortly be published.

Co-operative Union—Free Advertisements in Army Regulations.

MR. CHARLES WILSON (Hull, W.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, before deciding to give free advertisement in the Army Regulations to the Co-operative Union, he will consider the interests of retail grocers.

MR. MARSHALL HALL (Lancashire, Southport): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he has decided to give free advertisements in the Army Regulations to the Co-operative Union; and, if so, whether he will reconsider his decision in view of the advantage that such advertisements will give them over private traders.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) I have explained in a letter to the Grocers' Union that there is no intention of giving in the Army Regulations a free advertisement to the Co-operative Union.

Naturalisation of Aliens in the Transvaal Colony.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Ordinance No. 46, Transvaal Colony, and in particular Sub-section 1 of Clause 1 (naturalisation of aliens), has been in any way altered or amended since its promulgation in 1902; and, if so, what is now the period during which aliens must reside in the Transvaal Colony ere they acquire the right to apply for naturalisation.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) So far as I am aware the ordinance has not been amended.

Property in the Swaziland Protectorate.

SIR CUTHBERT QUILTER (Suffolk, Sudbury): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that, although a year has elapsed since the proclamation of peace, the position of those holding property or concessions in the Swaziland Protectorate has not yet been defined, that no property can at present be transferred as the Registry of Deeds has not been reopened; and whether he can state when the necessary arrangements will be completed to put an end to this delay.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) I regret that there has been unavoidable delay in dealing with these matters, but it has been found necessary to provide by Order in Council for the proper administration of Swaziland. The Order will be issued very soon, and no time will then be lost in setting up the requisite administrative machinery.

British Trade with the Colonies.

MR. D. A. THOMAS: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will consider the advisability of inviting the assistance of Colonial Governments in an investigation of the extent to which, in each of the colonies, the produce and manufactures of the colonies have in recent years displaced or are displacing similar British products hitherto imported; and the causes of such displacement, on lines corresponding to the invitation in respect to the inquiry into the displacement of British by foreign imports contained in his despatch of 28th November, 1895.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) The difficulties of investigating the movement of trade which does not pass through the Custom Houses appear to be insuperable, but the information already in our possession with regard to the exports of British and Irish produce to the colonies shows a large and continuous increase. The yearly average figures for the five-year periods 1876–1880, 1881–1885, 1886–1890, 1891–1895, 1896–1900, are as follows:—£67,455,270, £81,294,831, £81,186,508, £75,168,121, £86,043,165; and the figures for 1902 are £109,028,611.

MR. D. A. THOMAS: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the further and fuller despatch on the subject of colonial products which might advantageously be exported to the United Kingdom or other parts of the British Empire contemplated in paragraph 7 of his despatch of 28th November, 1895, has been sent to Colonial Governors; and, if so, will a copy of the despatch, with the replies thereto, be laid upon the Table of the House.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) While the matter was still under consideration the Board of Trade appointed a Committee to consider the whole question of the collection and distribution of commercial intelligence. The Report of that Committee was laid before Parliament in 1898, and resulted in the establishment of the Commercial Intelligence Branch of the Board of Trade, by which such information as that intended to be collected is continuously collected and disseminated.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Somaliland.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what is the number of camels recently purchased in or for Somaliland, and what is the total expenditure to date upon the expedition there; whether he has yet received General Manning's views upon future operations; and whether in that case he will state the intentions of the Government as to those operations.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg also to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state what reinforcements it is proposed to send from India, and also from this country, to Somaliland, and about what date it is anticipated that these reinforcements are likely to reach General Manning. Also, whether General Manning has now sufficient transport to enable him to relieve Colonel Cobbe, and for how long it is calculated Colonel Cobbe's supply of food will last.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): The expenditure up to date on the Somaliland expedition amounts, so far as can be estimated, to about £400,000, as against £500,000 voted in last year's and the present Estimates. The position in Somaliland at present is as follows: On 5th May instructions were sent to General Manning to gather his outlying garrisons together and concentrate them at Bohotle. General Manning estimated that his available transport and provisions would fully enable him to carry out this movement, and we have heard nothing from him to cast doubt on his power to effect the concentration. Meantime the Abyssinian advance to Gerlogubi has caused the Mullah to move to the north-east, and his mounted troops are reported in the neighbourhood of Damot on the route of General Manning's march. Damot is 140 miles from Galadi, and we have no reason to suppose Galadi is threatened. General Manning has not asked for reinforcements, but, as the mortality of camels has been heavy, His Majesty's Government have ordered 1,200 camels to be sent from Aden, of which 700 have reached Berbera, and 1,300 from India, which are due at Berbera next week. Three hundred men of the Hampshire regiment and 300 Indian troops have also been ordered from Aden to Berbera with full transport, and will leave at once, and the Indian Government are holding further reinforcements from India in readiness for despatch if required.

CAPTAIN NORTON: Has General Manning transport sufficient to enable him to return to his base, and how long may Colonel Cobbe's food supplies be expected to last?

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: Will the movements of the Mullah from the south-west to the north-east not take the Mullah into British territory; what are the troops available, apart from the garrison of Berbera, for operations in the field, either under General Manning or Colonel Cobbe; and when do the War Office intend to make a light railway to help out the question of transport?

MR. BRODRICK: We have no reason to suppose that Galadi, which was occupied by Colonel Cobbe, and from which he has since removed, is in any way threatened, and therefore there is no question of his food supply or transport. As to a light railway, that is a question which would require very serious consideration; and we have no reason to suppose at present that the state of the roads would enable the railway to be laid down with rapidity. In any case, it would involve great cost. The House must excuse me from giving exact details of the forces which are available at different points. His Majesty's Government have sent 600 men from Aden because they thought it well to place additional men at Berbera in case they should be required. But no demand has yet been made for reinforcements.

MR. LAMBERT (Devonshire, South Molton): Is the War Office in communication with General Manning, or are communications broken? Is General Manning in communication with Colonel Cobbe?

MR. BRODRICK: According to our last information, General Manning and Colonel Cobbe may be at this moment with one force. But for the last fortnight or three weeks we have had no information from General Manning, as at this moment he is executing his march to Damot in his retirement on Bohotle.

MR. LAMBERT: Are the communications with General Manning broken?

MR. BRODRICK: We have direct communication with Colonel Swan at Bohotle, and as soon as he hears from General Manning we shall hear from him.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Why is the Boer contingent being withdrawn when fresh troops are being sent?

MR. BRODRICK: They had come to the end of their engagement. They engaged for a certain period, and, having served with excellent results, they have returned to South Africa.

Woolwich Arsenal Disaster.

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can give the House any information regarding the awful calamity which happened at Woolwich Arsenal this morning, by which it is reported fifteen men have lost their lives, and forty others have been injured.

MR. BRODRICK: I deeply regret to say that a very serious explosion took place in the lyddite shell-filling rooms, Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, at about 8.15 a.m. to-day. The following is the list of casualties:—Killed: J. Usher, Frank Curren, W. Edwards, C. Adam, A. Swords, Alfred Greenlees, — Pinhorn, G. Case, E. Newton, — Remington, J. T. Larkins (died after admission to hospital). The remains of four men are unrecognised; the following five are missing:— — Morley, S. Johnson, — Herbert, — Marshall, — Connor. Very seriously injured: A. Goldsmith, A. Stevens, F. Stevens. Less seriously injured: — Webb, G. Crofts, A Saunders, F. Smith, W. Wood, D. Gaurd, E. Stevenson, A. Smedley, E. Howell, E. Hammond, H. Wickham, N. G. Titmarsh, J. Waters, J. Hillers. No further detailed information can be given until the Report of the Board of Inquiry, which will be forthwith assembled, has been received.

Captain NORTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman take steps to see that the families of the men who have been killed do not suffer?

Mr. BRODRICK: Of course I shall be glad to do anything which lies in my power in that direction. Any resources we have under the ordinary rules will be used.

1st Battalion Royal Irish Rifles.

Mr. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that the 1st Battalion of Royal Irish Rifles have been six years on foreign service, he can state when they are likely to return to the Home depôt.

Mr. BRODRICK: As the ordinary tour abroad of an infantry unit is sixteen or seventeen years, this battalion is not likely to return home for some years.

Mr. SLOAN: But did not this battalion suffer severely during the war?

Mr. BRODRICK: I am afraid that the hardships suffered by this battalion were also suffered by the great majority of our battalions in South Africa, and to recall this one would only put a further burden on some other battalion.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Are these men already tired of serving their country?

No answer was returned.

The Dynamite Duty in South Africa.

Mr. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Government of Sir Gordon Sprigg asked either him or Lord Milner to create a preferential tariff in favour of dynamite manufactured in Cape Colony for use in the Transvaal against British manufacturers; and, if no such communication was received, will he say why this preferential duty was imposed by Lord Milner, seeing outside the Transvaal there is no other dynamite factory in South Africa except that of the De Beers Company.

The following question also appeared on the Paper—

Mr. MARKHAM: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has sanctioned a coast duty on any manufactured goods consigned to the Transvaal; and, if so, what articles besides dynamite are taxed in this manner; whether, seeing that dynamite manufactured at the De Beers Company's new factory at Cape Town pays no duty when used in the Transvaal, will he say for what reasons this disability has been created against British dynamite manufacturers; and will he lay upon the Table of the House the protests addressed to him by British dynamite manufacturers against this new monopoly granted to the De Beers Company on all dynamite imported by them into the Transvaal.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. J. Chamberlain, Birmingham, W.): I propose to answer the two Questions together.

Mr. MARKHAM: On a point of order. If the right hon. Gentleman intends to take that course I will withdraw the second Question.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I shall answer the two. I have no reason to suppose that any request was made by the Cape Government for preferential treatment of Cape dynamite in the Transvaal, and if the hon. Member will refer to Command Paper, 1599, he will see that Article XVII of the Customs

Convention gives the Transvaal Government power to make such arrangements as will prevent Cape dynamite from enjoying any preferential treatment within the Transvaal. I stated on Monday last† that the question of taking action under this Article is now under consideration, and that being so I am unable to make any further statement at the present time, and no useful purpose would be served by laying on the Table the protests of British manufacturers to which the hon. Member refers. The hon. Member will find in the Convention itself all information as to the manufactured articles which will be subject to a coast duty when imported into the Transvaal.

MR. MARKHAM: Is it not the fact that dynamite is now manufactured in Cape Colony and imported into the Transvaal free of duty? Yes or no?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: If the hon. Member wants further information let him put down a Question.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): Is it not the fact that Lord Milner, who has imposed this preferential duty in favour of the De Beers Company, is himself a large owner of shares in the company?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I believe there is no foundation whatever for that statement.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: And I believe the reverse.

Native Labour Recruiting for the Transvaal in Central Africa.

SIR MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbrightshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether a recruiting agent has been appointed for the Port Herald district of Central Africa; and, if so, will he state whether he is a member of a firm who three years ago were convicted of cruelty to natives imported from Anguruland, which was fined £250, and their manager banished from the country; and whether his remuneration is partly by pay and partly by commission per head of natives recruited.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord CRANBORNE, Rochester): Mr. Steblecki, well known to His Majesty's Commissioner in British Central Africa as a straightforward man of excellent character and well qualified for the post, has been appointed recruiting agent in the Protectorate for natives going to the Transvaal. He is not a member of the firm referred to. He is employed by the Johannesburg Labour Association, and receives remuneration from them.

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University): Is there any official of the Central African Government who intervenes in this recruiting or who makes representations?

LORD CRANBORNE: Every recruit has to be recruited in the presence of a magistrate.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Is there any interpreter to explain to these unfortunate men?

LORD CRANBORNE: Oh, yes.

The Kischineff Outrages.

MR. STUART SAMUEL (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he will obtain from a British Consular Officer a Report as to the measures which have been taken to bring to justice the persons responsible for the late outrages on the Jews at Kischineff, and the punishments, if any, inflicted on such persons; and if he will lay the same upon the Table.

LORD CRANBORNE: His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg, and His Majesty's Consul-General at Odessa (the nearest place to Kischineff at which a British Consular Officer is stationed) will undoubtedly report all that comes to their knowledge as to the measures taken by the Russian authorities. But the matter shall not be lost sight of.

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†See page 943.

When the Reports are received I hope to be able to give full information to the House.

Preferential Railway Rates for Foreign Importers.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has received any official information to the effect that the carrying companies give preferential rates to foreign importers; whether he will instruct the Railway Department of the Board of Trade to inquire into and report upon this subject.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BONAR LAW, Glasgow, Blackfriars): The answer to the first part of the hon. Member's Question is in the negative, and I may refer to the reply given by my right hon. friend the President of the Board of Trade on the 19th of last month † to a similar Question addressed to him by the hon. Member for Dundee. The Railway Department of the Board of Trade are at all times prepared to investigate any specific complaints of the nature referred to.

Free Railway Passes for M.P.'s.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the fact that the Members of this House give time to the consideration of Railway Bills in Committee, he will endeavour to arrange with the railway companies a system similar to that in force in other countries and the colonies that members of legislatures shall have free passes.

MR. BONAR LAW: The President of the Board of Trade is not prepared to take any action in the direction suggested.

MR. FIELD: But will not the right hon. Gentleman take the matter into his consideration?

MR. BONAR LAW: He has already considered it several times.

MR. FIELD: But is that a reason why he should not consider it again?

No answer was returned.

Food and Raw Material produced within the United Kingdom.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any particulars are available as to the quantity of food and raw material produced within the United Kingdom; or whether it is possible for him to give any statement as to the value of the main commodities under these heads produced at home, compared with what we import from foreign countries or the colonies.

MR. BONAR LAW: There are no official statistics as to the total quantities of food and raw materials of all kinds produced within the United Kingdom. Such particulars as are available respecting the quantities and values of certain classes of food and materials produced are published in the "Agricultural Returns" of the Board of Agriculture and the Home Office Mineral Statistics. The principal statistics are summarised in the Board of Trade Abstract of Labour Statistics.

MR. LOUGH: Is it not in the power of the Board of Trade to get the statistics?

MR. BONAR LAW: If the hon. Member will examine the Returns to which I have referred him I think he will find all the information he requires.

Scottish Education Grants.

MR. BLACK (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate how many of the schools which will participate in the grants under heads (a), (b), and (c), respectively, of Section 1 of the Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, dated 28th May, 1903, are voluntary schools, and how many are public schools.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SCOTT DICKSON, Glasgow, Bridgeton): I may refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave yesterday to the Member for North-west Lanark †. In taking the number of schools no distinction was made between public and voluntary schools, and it is impossible without notice to give the numbers separately. Nor would it enable us to say how many public and voluntary schools respectively will qualify for the additional grants during the three months ending on 31st December, 1903.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxii, 1093.

Gordon-Bennett Motor Race.

MR. REMNANT (Finsbury, Holborn): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether His Majesty's troops are to be used to keep the course for the Gordon-Bennett motor race in Ireland; and, if so, on what grounds he has granted the use of the troops for this police duty.

MR. BRODRICK: There is no intention of using His Majesty's troops to keep the course for the Gordon-Bennett motor race. The civil power have the right to call for the assistance of the troops in case of riot or disturbances, but I am advised that this would not include their use for such purposes as are indicated in the Question. The officer commanding any troops would, of course, be justified in establishing pickets at any place which might be necessary to preserve order among the troops under his command.

MR. REMNANT: Have not orders been given to the troops to keep themselves in readiness from six o'clock in the morning until three in the afternoon?

MR. BRODRICK: I am not aware of it. I have consulted the authorities, and have given the hon. Member the answer which I have received.

MR. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the military have been used in connection with evictions in Ireland?

[No answer was returned.]

MR. LEAMY (Kildare, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will say on whom will fall the expenses of the extra police necessary for the protection of the public during the motor race for the Gordon-Bennett cup.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (MR. WYNDHAM, Dover): I am in communication with the Treasury on the subject.

MR. LEAMY: When may I hope to get an answer? The question is pressing.

MR. WYNDHAM: At an early date, which I may be able perhaps to indicate in the course of this evening.

County Sligo Telegraphs.

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he has received a Resolution of the Sligo Rural District Council, dated the 2nd instant, relative to the establishment of telegraphic communication between Ballintogher and Callooney, county Sligo; and, if so, whether he will favourably consider the matter.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.): Yes, Sir, and I am now awaiting a report on the subject from the local officers.

Irish Railway Rates.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the rate of a waggon of sheep from Ballyhaunis, county Mayo, to Liverpool is £4 10s., whilst the rate from Claremorris, a station on the same line thirteen miles further from Dublin, is only £4; that such preferential rates exist in Ireland when there is either railway or water competition; and whether he will have inquiries made with the view of inducing the carrying companies to give similar mileage rates from each station.

MR. BONAR LAW: Representations have been made to the Board of Trade that the rates are as stated by the hon. Member, and the Board are in communication with the Midland and Great Western Railway Company on the subject.

Irish Railway Rates—Judge Adams' Views.

MR. EDWARD MITCHELL (Fermanagh, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to a statement made by His Honour Judge Adams, at the recent Limerick quarter sessions, when, at the hearing of some railway cases, his Honour said that no good or prosperity could ever come to Ireland until the whole question of railway rates was considered and re-adjusted in the interest of public requirements, and that Ireland could never be a prosperous country until this was done; and, if so, will he take steps to bring about fair and reasonable railway rates for the benefit of farmers, traders, and others.

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† See page 1161.

Mr. WYNDHAM: At the request of my right hon. friend I will reply to this Question. The Department of Agriculture is constantly investigating questions affecting railway transit and rates, and obtaining information which would prove of utility should it ever be decided to appoint a Committee of Inquiry. The Department does not think, however, that the time has yet arrived for such an inquiry.

Londonderry Electric Lighting.

Mr. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will explain why the application of the Londonderry County Borough Council to the Treasury, through the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland, for the sum of £35,000 for the purpose of an installation of private electric lighting in the county borough, was refused, seeing that an application for a larger sum for a like purpose was made by the City of Dublin County Borough Council, and was granted by the Treasury.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Elliot, Durham): It has been the recent policy of the Treasury, owing to their heavy borrowing requirements, to restrict Government loans to cases in which the borrower has either no power to borrow by issuing stock or cannot do so on moderate terms in the particular case. The application from the Londonderry County Borough Council did not fall within this category, and was therefore refused. The exception in the case of Dublin was only made for special reasons urged upon the Treasury by the Irish Government, which were not present in the case of the Londonderry application.

Mr. P. A. M'Hugh, M.P.

Mr. LEAMY: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland if he will say whether there are any limits to the term for which, under warrant of committal for contempt of Court, Mr. M'Hugh, M.P., can be kept in gaol; and if the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland possesses the power to order Mr. M'Hugh's release.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.): The answer to both of these Questions is in the negative. I think it only right to say that before the hon. Member was arrested application was made on his behalf to the Judge who issued the attachment order that it might be rescinded. The learned Judge said he could not consider the application unless it was accompanied by an expression of regret on the part of the hon. Member. The duration of the hon. Member's imprisonment is very much in his own hands.

Mr. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): Has any communication been made on the part of the Government to Judge Ross?

Mr. ATKINSON: Certainly not.

Mr. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): What did the right hon. Gentleman mean by the words "the duration of the hon. Member's imprisonment is very much in his own hands?"

Arms (Ireland) Act.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that Mathew C. Kenny, of Quilty, County Clare, on the 31st March, in this year, discharged repeatedly a rifle on the public roads, and whether the attention of the police will be called to this matter.

MR. WYNDHAM: MR. Kenny discharged one shot on the public road on the date mentioned. He did this in order to release a cartridge which he could not otherwise extract. The attention of the police has already been drawn to the matter.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire of the police whether the statements in my Question are not perfectly accurate? Where did he get his information that only one shot was fired?

MR. WYNDHAM was understood to reply that there was no need to make further inquiry.

Cork Model Schools.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Cork): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in reference to the daily average attendance of pupils at the Cork Model Schools, whether he can state how many children (excluding ninety-two infants) are in daily average attendance in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th books respectively, and how many teachers, principals, assistants, and monitors are required for those children.

MR. WYNDHAM: The daily average attendances in 1902 were eight, twenty-six and twenty-nine in the three classes respectively. Two principal teachers, assisted by two monitors and three pupil teachers were employed in their instruction. The principal teachers supervised, in addition, the general work of the school.

Training of Irish School Teachers.

MR. FLYNN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state what schools in Cork under the National Board, other than the model schools, were used as centres for the training of teachers in cookery, hand and eye training, and other technical subjects.

MR. WYNDHAM: The following Convent National Schools—St. Vincent's, St. Joseph's, North and South Presentation Schools.

Cork Technical Committee and the Model Schools.

MR. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state what was the result of the conference between Head Inspectors Downing and Purser, representing the Commissioners of National Education, and the Very Rev. Canon Fleming, Rev. P. J. Dowling, and Mr. McMullen, architect, representing the Cork Technical Committee, respecting the use of portion of the model schools; were joint or separate reports submitted by the inspectors; and if he will state what was the nature of the Reports submitted to the Commissioners.

MR. WYNDHAM: The Inspectors made special Reports to the Commissioners. All such Reports are Departmental Documents and are invariably regarded as confidential.

MR. FLYNN asked what was the result of the meeting of the Commissioners of National Education in respect to the occupation of the model schools.

MR. WYNDHAM: The Commissioners asked that the schools should be given up at the earliest possible date. That was the last decision; at all events I am not aware that there was anything later. If the hon. Member wishes I will endeavour to obtain further information. As the hon. Gentleman is aware the Commissioners have a difference with the Managers of the Local Technical Instruction Committee.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): Last time the right hon. Gentleman said he would communicate with the National Board and express the view that this eviction of the Technical Instruction Committee should not take place until the subject had been discussed in this House on the Education Estimates.† Has the hon. Gentleman made that representation, and if so, with what result?

MR. WYNDHAM: I take it that the Commissioners adhere to the view that the use of the schools by the Committee must terminate on the earliest convenient date. I cannot say if any more definite arrangements have been made. Of course the Commissioners have the power——

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxii., 1221.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: The date has been already fixed—the 30th June.

MR. WYNDHAM: I cannot say whether, the earliest convenient date means the date already referred to. I am prepared to inquire.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): Is not the Technical Committee referred to representative of all classes and creeds?

MR. WYNDHAM: Even if that were so it would not alter the authority and powers of the Commissioners.

MR. SLOAN: Is it not a fact that this Committee would never have been evicted if it had complied with the Commissioners' decision?

MR. WYNDHAM: The matter rests with the Commissioners, not with me.

MR. FLYNN: Is it not the fact that the Committee did comply with the requirements of the Commissioners?

[No answer was returned.]

Letterkenny Railway.

MR. M'FADDEN (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if the Board of Works will take steps to secure that the passengers who had paid their fares by the Letterkenny Railway and the Letterkenny to Burtonport Railway on the 15th May last, and who were unable to obtain travelling accommodation by these lines, will be refunded their fares and have compensation made them by the Lough Swilly Railway Company for the failure to provide sufficient carriages.

MR. WYNDHAM: All such fares have been refunded on application. Other persons who did not apply for a refund were allowed to travel on the following day.

Letterkenny Hiring Fair—Railway Breakdown.

MR. M'FADDEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Lough Swilly Railway Company which works the new Letterkenny to Burtonport Extension Railway, County Donegal, failed to provide sufficient accommodation for passengers on the line on the occasion of the hiring fair at Letterkenny on 15th May last; and whether, in view of the overcrowding of compartments on that occasion, and of the fact that a number of passengers on the same occasion were put into goods waggons and cattle trucks and charged the same fares as persons in third class passenger carriages, and that the morning train to Letterkenny from Burtonport was an hour late in arriving, and the evening train was an hour-and-a-half late in leaving Letterkenny, and that a number of persons were unable to obtain travelling accommodation in the train at Letterkenny Station and at Old Town Station, the Board of Works, with whom the Lough Swilly Company entered into agreement for working the line, will see that the terms of the agreement are carried out and sufficient accommodation is provided for the travelling public.

MR. WYNDHAM: I understand that some inconvenience was caused to passengers on this line on the date mentioned; but it is denied by the Company that passengers were placed in a cattle truck. It must not be forgotten, however, that the Letterkenny and Burtonport Railway was only opened for traffic in March last, and that the interval that has since elapsed has hardly been sufficient to enable the Company to estimate adequately the requirements of the line on the particular occasion in question. The Board of Works is in correspondence with the Company with a view to having such arrangements made as will obviate any recurrence of complaint, so far as possible.

MR. M'FADDEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that the special morning train from Londonderry to Letterkenny, County Donegal, on the Letterkenny Railway, worked by the Lough Swilly Railway Company under agreement with the Board of Works, due to arrive at 10 o'clock did not arrive on the occasion of the hiring fair at Letterkenny on the 15th May last until

12 o'clock; that the train due at Letterkenny at 1.40 p.m. on same occasion did not arrive until 3 o'clock, that the evening train for Londonderry due to leave Letterkenny at 6.50 did not leave till 8 o'clock, and that a number of passengers were unable to obtain accommodation; and, if so, whether, considering that the passengers, mostly farmers by these trains, at present pay a tax of 3½d. in the pound towards the paying off of interest on the mortgage held on the line by the Board of Works, the Board will see that the line is properly equipped and worked by the company.

MR. WYNDHAM: The 6.30 and 8.40 morning trains arrived late at Letterkenny owing to heavy traffic. The company deny that any passengers were left behind; but if names and addresses of persons who allege they were so inconvenienced are furnished further inquiry will be made.

MR. M'FADDEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the agreement between the Board of Works and the Lough Swilly Railway Company for the working of the Letterkenny to Burtonport Extension Railway, County Donegal, and the provision relating to the use of the rolling stock of this line on the Letterkenny or Londonderry and Lough Swilly lines worked by the same Company, he will state whether on the 15th May last the use by the Company of part of this rolling stock on the Letterkenny line was the occasion of the insufficient accommodation afforded to passengers on the Burtonport line and the consequent complaints; and, if so, will he say what action he proposes to take.

MR. WYNDHAM: The Company explain that this statement is incorrect, and that the carriages in use on the Burtonport line on the date in question were one in excess of the normal equipment of the line.

Irish Salmon and Trout Fisheries.

MR. EDWARD MITCHELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the Irish Government has yet taken any, and if so, what steps, to carry into effect the recommendations of the recent Viceregal Commission which inquired into the depreciation of salmon and trout culture in the inland rivers of Ireland, and more particularly the recommendation of the establishment of an Irish Fishery Department, responsible only to Parliament, and distinct from the Irish Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction.

MR. WYNDHAM: Effect has been given to all the recommendations of the Commission which do not necessitate legislation. The Commission did not recommend the formation of a Fishery Department of the character suggested in the question. On the contrary, it proposed the establishment of a Fishery Board subordinate to the Department of Agriculture. The latter Department has appointed a special Advisory Committee on Fisheries to assist it in this branch of its work.

Irish Poor Law Officers' Superannuation.

MR. JOYCE (Limerick): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that the Poor Law Association of Ireland are satisfied that the amount of one farthing in the pound annually on the valuation of Ireland from the rates, with the officers' contributions would be sufficient for the purposes of the Poor Law Superannuation (Ireland) Bill; and, if so, whether he will grant facilities for the passing of the Bill into law in the present Session of Parliament.

MR. WYNDHAM: The Bill of this year differs in no material respect from the Bill of last year. The Actuary, whose Report upon the Bill of 1901 was presented to Parliament, considers that, even on the very favourable assumptions on which he based his Report, a rate of one farthing in the pound on the valuations of unions would be wholly inadequate to meet the liabilities of the fund proposed to be set up in the Bill. The question of facilities for discussing the measure during the present session should be addressed to the Prime Minister.

The Fiscal Inquiry.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the first Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the statement of the Colonial Secretary that the new fiscal policy suggested by him is one which the Government invites the country and the House to discuss, he will afford an opportunity, and, if so, when and how, for this House to discuss it.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): My hon. friend suggests that the Government ought to give a day for an abstract discussion of this question. I do not take that view. It is open to the Leader of the Opposition, if he desires, to obtain a day, under the conditions I suggested last night; but, no doubt, before this question is settled there will be plenty of opportunities of discussing it in all its bearings.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Is the discussion in the country to take place before an opportunity is given to discuss the question here, though the Government invited the House to discuss the matter?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not follow the hon. Member. Does he mean that no speech is ever to be made on any subject in the country unless it has received preliminary discussion in the House of Commons? But as a matter of fact there has been discussion in the House of Commons, and some of it last night was of a highly instructive character.

MR. LABOUCHERE: These were the words used by the Colonial Secretary when he invited us to discussion——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. This is debating the answer; it is not a request for information.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the proposed inquiry into the advisability of changing the present fiscal system of the United Kingdom, in order to adopt a preferential tariff with the colonies, will be carried on openly before the public; and will he state what precise form the inquiry will take, and whether it will extend its scope to the principles of our fiscal system or be confined to examination of fact and circumstances.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I answered a Question of similar import yesterday, and I do not suppose my hon. friend wishes me to repeat my answer.† I may say incidentally that in replying to interrogatories in this House, I have gone a great deal farther than any of my predecessors in touching upon the methods by which the Cabinet may pursue one of the many inquiries which a Cabinet have to pursue. I hope now that the subject may be allowed to rest.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered the last part of my Question.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The last thing I should desire to do would be to give any answer in this House which would suggest a limitation of the scope of the inquiry which we have undertaken.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): As the right hon. Gentleman has referred to his predecessors, may I ask whether there is any precedent for an inquiry by the Cabinet, after the subject has been publicly raised by one Member of the Cabinet?

[No answer was returned.]

SHOPS (EARLY CLOSING) BILL [LORDS.]

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 248.]

NEW BILL.

DAY INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS (IRELAND) BILL.

"To provide for the Establishment of Day Industrial Schools in Ireland," presented by Mr. Harrington; supported by Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Patrick O'Brien, and Mr. Field; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 1st July, and to be printed. [Bill 249.]

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† See page 1174.

AGED PENSIONERS BILL.

Ordered, That the Select Committee on the Aged Pensioners Bill be nominated of Sir Alexander Hargreaves Brown, Mr. Channing, Mr. Crean, Mr. Flower, Mr. Goulding, Mr. John Hutton, Mr. Lloyd-George, Mr. Grant Lawson, Mr. O'Shee, Mr. Pemberton, Colonel Pilkington, Sir Robert Reid, Mr. Remnant, Mr. Shackleton, and Mr. Skewes-Cox.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(*Sir Alexander Acland-Hood.*)

SUPPLY [13TH ALLOTTED DAY.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

CLASS IV.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £808,828, be granted to His Majesty to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for Public Education in Scotland, and for Science and Art in Scotland, including a Grant in Aid."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire) said the work of the year had been more than usually interesting. The normal increase in the Vote would have been £45,116. The actual increase was £151,116, but that was owing to the New Aid Grant. The chief items in the normal estimate were £16,262 extra for grants to day schools, £11,500 for continuation classes, and nearly £7,000 for fee grants. There was also an increase of £5,400 for grants to necessitous School Boards. The sum in sub-head N. of £2,000 for agricultural education had been absorbed and put under the general sub-head. That was so far as the institutions benefited, a great advantage, because in former years agricultural colleges were kept to a fixed grant of £2,000; but they would now find their grants expanding according to the fulfilment of the conditions of the Continuation Code, just like any other institution. To explain the increase of this year from £45,116 to £151,116, the Committee would see that the general aid grant was £106,000. That represented the money which the Government thought it right to give to Scotland in respect of moneys that had been given to England under the English Education Bill. It was, however, for a half year, but England only had a half year in this Estimate. The way in which the proportions were calculated was according to the population of the one country to the other, and no doubt that was a fair way of calculation. Under the recent Education Act, there was for the first time a direct Imperial contribution to local resources for education in every part of England, and as that was paid out of Imperial taxation it was obvious that Scotland had to be treated in the same way. They took the proportion that the English population bore to Scotland, and, subtracting the grants under the Act of 1897, they arrived at the sum to be given to Scotland.

MR. THOMAS SHAW (Hawick Burghs) asked whether the proportion was 80 to 11, the figures with which they had been familiar in the past.

MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY said they were for all practical purposes almost identical. In 1897, when the necessitous schools and the voluntary schools got aid grants, the extra contribution was made to Scotland. The Chancellor of the Exchequer at that time promised that a certain 12s. grant in the matter of the fee grant should be maintained at 12s. although the direct payment to Scotland was only 10s. But they had never needed to call upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer for any cash under these grants. The bargain made with the Treasury was that they should take this £106,000 and divide it by the number of children in average attendance, the result being that whereas they got the amount given based upon the proportion of the population, at the same time they kept to themselves for all future time the advantage of working up the average attendance. As that swelled, so would their grant swell.

In school attendance and school staff there had been satisfactory increases. The increased attendance was largely due to the effect of the Act of 1901, under which the school age was considerably raised. The number of scholars on the register had increased from 767,000 in 1901 to 768,000 in 1902. But those figures did not represent the full measure of the improvement. The average attendance would supply a much more crucial figure. In 1901 the number was 636,000 against 646,000 in 1902, so that while the names on the register had increased by only 1,000 on 767,000, the average attendance had increased by 10,000 on 636,000. Moreover, the increase was entirely amongst the older scholars. The scholars under the age of seven years had actually decreased, between the ages of seven and ten there had been a slight increase, but the chief increase had been between ten and fourteen. This increase in the number of scholars had been met by an increased and more efficient teaching staff. There were 246 fewer pupil teachers; the uncertificated teachers were practically stationary; but the certificated teachers had increased by 256. The number of students in training, which had rapidly increased in recent years, had still further increased from 1,492 to 1,532. The classes in special subjects for teachers—such as drawing, elementary science, nature knowledge, and so forth—had been a great success. In the year ended March 31, 1902, there were 130 such courses, with an attendance of 5,000 teachers, and 169 new courses had since been established. In fact the development had been extraordinarily rapid. A peculiar interest attached to the figures in connection with the Continuation Class Code, because, although it was not a new policy, this was the first time the Committee had had a complete year under review. In this matter he might say in passing that the permanent officials had made one of the most accurate estimates ever framed. The expenses under the Code were estimated at £95,100. There were concerned 774 different continuation classes, 78,000 students, four central institutions with 10,000 students, and forty-eight science schools with 4,000 students; and the actual expenditure amounted to £95,139, or £39 more than the estimate. He did not think that anything in the way of an estimate had ever been done better than that. Grants had also been paid to three navigation schools with 264 students, and to three agricultural colleges with between 400 and 500 students. Of the total number of students dealt with under the Continuation Class Code, no fewer than 26,929 were in the county of Lanark, but it was a matter of regret that in some of the outlying districts the number was very few.

Mr. A. Graham Murray.

It might interest the Committee to know which of the subjects were most largely taken up. Arithmetic came first, with 10,611 students; then shorthand with 9,744; needlework followed with 9,717; while book-keeping had 7,832. These classes were not necessarily conducted by certificated teachers, but might be taught by any approved person, whose qualifications had to be sufficiently attested, and whose knowledge of special subjects had to be not merely theoretical but practical. In the matter of secondary education, it was not necessary to explain in detail the different sources of supply Under the Act of 1890, by which County Councils were given money which they could apply either to the relief of rates or to secondary education, the grant from the Treasury was £79,000 as against £87,000 in the previous year, and the grants in relief of rates and for education were reduced in about the same proportion, giving £56,000 for education as compared with £62,000 in the previous year. Of that £56,000 about £13,000 was handed over to be dealt with by the secondary education committees in the counties. Then there was an education grant of £60,000 under the Act of 1892. That was assigned according to schemes drawn up by the education committees of the several counties and approved by the Department. Lastly, under the Agricultural and Local Taxation Rating Act, 1898, a total amount of £37,688 was distributed by the Department among the various secondary schools not in receipt of block grants, an additional amount being given in proportion to average attendance and the amount of burden borne by the local rates, while a part of the money was reserved for aid to central institutions of more than local importance.

The sum of £106,000 had to be distributed by Minute. It was given in the form of a general aid grant, and could be distributed only by Minute in the same way as money under the general Education Acts; in other words, the Minute was merely a sort of addition to the Code. That Minute was placed on the Table of the House just before the Whitsuntide recess in order that the necessary month should not elapse before there was an opportunity for discussion. The idea was to give a certain measure of endowment to schools in sparsely populated districts, to assist them in having an adequate teaching staff, and a bonus of £20, £30, or £40, was given to the smaller schools for providing an extra teacher or teachers. It was impossible to say exactly how much would be required under that head, because it would not be known until 31st December next how many schools had come into line to earn the grant. Two points, however, were certain; first, that any school which came in would still be burdened locally with at least one-fourth of the expense of the extra teacher or teachers, so that the money would not be given without corresponding local effort; and secondly, that so far as this scheme was concerned the idea of the Department was that the sum should not exceed £25,000. The rest was distributed over the various schools in the country.

MR. CHARLES DOUGLAS (Lanarkshire, N.W.) asked if all those were yearly sums.

MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY said he understood that was so. He was not quite certain, but he would let the hon. Member know. Hon. Members would see that in spending this money under the Minute it would be right probably not to try any more ambitious proposals, but just to give it to all the schools carrying on the work of primary education. It was in strict accordance with what had been done in England, so far as it was a subvention from Imperial sources for education. This was necessarily only a temporary arrangement, and they could not, of course, have diverted this money by Minute except for purposes of primary education. He very much doubted whether there would be any great wish to do otherwise, but they need not trouble their heads about that because he supposed it was common ground for agreement on both sides that the time was very near when they would have another Scotch Education Bill—he hoped they were on the very eve of it—and given that Bill, it was quite certain that the whole resources of education would be in the melting-pot and that the Houses of Parliament would do what they pleased with them. The arrangement proposed under the Minute would, he believed, be found to be not only just but popular.

The general policy this year would be very interesting. Two things had brought matters to a point. First there had been the effect of the Act of 1901 in prolonging the school existence, and then there was the fact that owing to the £106,000 they had really more money. With regard to the first fact the Department had been face to face with the settling, so far as it could, of the further development of the general educational policy in Scotland. They had taken a great, and, he thought, crucial step in enlarging the scope of higher instruction in Scotland by adding as auxiliaries of the Universities certain central institutions for advanced instruction in technical subjects, commercial subjects, art, agriculture, and navigation. The institutions he referred to were as follows:—In Glasgow there were the West of Scotland Technical College, the Athenæum Commercial College, the School of Art, and the Agricultural College. In Edinburgh there were the Heriot-Watt College, which was both technical and commercial, the College of Agriculture, and the prospective School of Art. In Dundee there was the Technical Institute, which included both art and commerce. In Aberdeen there were Gordon's College, which was the central institution for technical and commercial subjects, Gray's School of Art, and an Agricultural Department. In Leith there was the School of Navigation. All these were existing with the exception of the prospective School of Art, and he did not mean to say that, owing to what the Department had done, they had changed their character, but at any rate they were given a great chance, to a great extent, of changing it. They were formerly treated by the Department in precisely the same way as ordinary continuation classes, and the grant from the Department depended upon the number of their elementary students. By this new departure they were really encouraged rather to abandon the prosecution of elementary instruction, to leave that to other agencies, and to develop instruction in special subjects to the highest pitch demanded by the industries and commerce of the districts. All these institutions were entirely under the management of representatives of local bodies, and accordingly they were now perfectly free to develop them upon lines approved of by the managers and local opinion. There were, of course, certain precautions against extravagance, but subject to that it was true to say that the grants would increase automatically with the local expenditure, and accordingly, if the local authorities had sufficient faith in the value of these institutions to adequately support and develop them, that support would find automatically an extra support in the Department as they went along.

It was, of course, to be kept in view that these institutions, if they were ever to attain to their full development and to occupy kindred positions to the positions institutions of the same character occupied abroad, there must be provision made in the primary and secondary schools for suitable preparation to allow pupils to avail themselves of these institutions adequately. Hitherto and in old times probably the only and perfectly legitimate aim of the secondary schools was to prepare for admission to the Universities, but now if this arrangement was to be a success there must be a further aim super-added—viz., in certain cases not to prepare for the University but for technical instruction in the various classes of institutions. Accordingly there had been instituted by the Department special commercial and technical certificates to encourage such preparation in secondary schools as was fit for introduction into these institutions. It was similar when they came to the higher departments in the primary schools. There again in old times their only idea was to prepare for the Universities. Of course, the very last thing that the Department wished to do was in any way to discourage that. They would be very sorry indeed if those who would naturally go to the Universities should be hampered in the preliminary training which they had been used to get and which they still thought should be fostered and encouraged. At the same time that ought not to be the only position in which a student should find himself. They were not only giving these institutions an opportunity to develop themselves, but they would now have pupils remaining at the primary schools for some time after the time when, under ordinary conditions, they could obtain a merit certificate, and the question of course was: What were they to do? With a view to that certain supplementary courses had been established. His noble friend at the head of the Department made a speech at Leith in February in which he not ambiguously sketched out the development that his policy was to take. Following upon that, circular 374 was sent out, and the greatest pains were taken that it should be most widely disseminated; and this again was followed by the introduction in the Code of the changes that were there sketched. It pointed out that while it was absolutely desirable that boys going to the Universities should have proper training, as they had had previously, yet they must not sacrifice the whole of the children for one or two advanced boys. Therefore it devoted itself to the discussion of the problem, what should they do with the children who were kept at school under the Act of 1901 after they had come to the end of the whole of their school curriculum, and who at the same time were not, as a matter of fact, going to the Universities. What they thought was that it would be unfortunate if a boy had to go over the work he had been doing before. At the same time none knew better than those interested in education that when children went away from school very young they forgot what they had learned, and the object of the view put forward in this circular was that, instead of being given entirely new work they should rather be instructed from what might be called the applied point of view, and shown in a practical way the actual uses in the ordinary processes of life of what they had learned.

If the boys were going to take up a University course, or some other class of training, there were special curricula to fit them for the walks in which they were entering. Upon that he desired to read somebody else's testimony and not that of the Education Department. There was a Report issued from the Merchants' Hall, Edinburgh, dated 11th June, 1903, in which attention was called to the fact that, since the issue in 1900 of the Report of a Joint Committee representing the Edinburgh Merchant Company and the Chambers of Commerce of Edinburgh and Leith, the Act of 1901 had extended the compulsory age to fourteen. Then the Report proceeded in the following terms:—

> "The period dating back to the Report has also been marked by many signs of activity on the part of the Scotch Education Department. Their Lordships have been devoting much attention to the subject of commercial education, and their zeal and interest are shown by changes made or foreshadowed in connection with their schemes for the award of group certificates, with the object of marking in a definite manner the stage of education reached by a pupil on leaving school. The certificates referred to are—(1) the Merit, (2) the Intermediate, (3) the Commercial, and (4) the Leaving. A few words of explanation may be given in regard to each for your guidance in selecting candidates for apprenticeships in your business.
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> "(1) The Merit Certificate is granted for proficiency in the three elementary subjects—reading, writing, and arithmetic. A pupil may pass the qualifying examination for it as soon after he reaches twelve as he has attained the necessary proficiency. He must, however, continue at school until, as above mentioned, he has attained the age of fourteen. After passing the examination he may enter on a commercial course, and on leaving school he will obtain a Merit Certificate, which will specify the date that he passed the examination, and the value put upon his attainments in the subsequent commercial course, so far as these admit of specific mention.
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> "(2) The Intermediate Certificate is primarily intended for pupils who are taking secondary subjects, but do not remain long enough at school to reach the standard of the Leaving Certificate proper. The minimum age at which the Intermediate Certificate may be obtained is fifteen. It indicates that the holder has been receiving higher instruction at a recognised school for not less than two years, and that he has reached a certain degree of attainment in the following range of subjects—viz., English, arithmetic, and elementary mathematics, two languages other than English, or one language with science and drawing. One of the subjects must be passed on the higher grade or standard; the rest may be on the lower grade.
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> "(3) The Commercial Certificate which the Department propose to institute should be specially welcomed by business men. It is intended to restrict it to pupils of not less than sixteen years of age, who, generally speaking, have satisfied the requirements of the Intermediate Certificate, and have subsequently studied at least one complete year in a special commercial course. In this course it is proposed that the principal subject of instruction should be a modern language other than English, with, in addition, commercial arithmetic, book-keeping, shorthand, and commercial history and geography.
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> "(4) The Leaving Certificate.—This certificate is designed to mark the completion of a full course of secondary education, and is only granted to applicants who have been receiving higher instruction at a recognised school for not less than four years. It is not attainable by boys of less age than seventeen, and indicates primarily ripeness for University studies."

Therefore, they were bound to look at the whole matter, because the two things, although in one sense having nothing to do with each other, were yet linked together in a general scheme. The leaving certificate took with it at least one of the ancient languages. He would remind the Committee that unless a student had one ancient language the University would not take him. If he wished commercial or technical instruction then he could either content himself with the intermediate certificate or take a full commercial certificate, and in either of these cases he could go on to the higher and specialised institutions which he had mentioned. He hoped the Committee would recognise that in these matters the Department had made an effort to meet the requirements of the case, but, of course, it was not claimed for one moment that there was finality in the arrangement. It was at any rate a well thought out and co-ordinated scheme of education, and he hoped that in any larger scheme which might be brought out under enactment, or otherwise, it would at least not be necessary to retrace the steps which had already been taken. He ought to mention one subject which was worthy of notice. If hon. Members would look at Section 11 of the Report they would see that a great deal had been done in connection with the Museum in Edinburgh. It had been in many ways improved and greater advantage had been taken of it for the purposes to which it ought to be applied. In connection with this matter he would point out, what was not generally known, that at the Museum they had now the headquarters of the Department in Edinburgh. The members of the Department and the Secretary himself hoped to be more frequently there in the future than in the past, and they looked to that office as the natural meeting place between them and persons in Scotland who were interested in these matters, and who had not the opportunity of meeting them in London.

The only other matter to which he desired to refer was one which did not bear directly on the Estimates, but was connected with the work of the Department. He could not sit down without saying a word upon the very valuable Report obtained this year from the Commission on Physical Training. He did not know how far that Report was familiar to hon. Members. If it was not, he could only commend it to them as exceedingly interesting reading. He thought it really opened up a new vista in regard to this and other aspects of school life. The statistics given in the Report were not only very interesting, but in some respects startling. They touched not only the question of town and country life, but they touched very directly certain aspects of the housing problem. So far as the schools were concerned he thought they indicated a new avenue of usefulness connected with the medical inspection of children. The Report showed the importance of medical inspection in connection with the question of physical development. Of course the various recommendations contained in the Report were naturally engaging the very serious attention of the Department. Hon. Members were probably aware that in the meantime the Department had not been idle, because at this very moment there was a Joint Committee sitting, composed of representatives of the Scotch Department and the English Department, with the view of framing some sort of model scheme for physical training in the various schools. The whole subject was replete with interest, and, if the Scotch Estimates were dreary, he thought he could do nothing better than assure hon. Members that they would find the reading of the Report a very profitable occupation.

*MR. THOMAS SHAW said that he had the greatest pleasure in assenting upon the last point made by his right hon. and learned friend, and part, also, from the merits of the recommendations of the Commissioners. There was one feature with regard to the Report on Physical Training which was well worthy of notice, and that was the despatch with which the proceedings of the Commission had been carried out. The thanks of that House were due to the noble Chairman and to the members of the Commission for the rapidity with which they had presented their Report. He hoped his right hon. and learned friend had not thought it out of place when he asked whether the circular numbered 374 had been sent to Members of Parliament. He complained last year of the manner in which information upon matters relating to Scotch education was communicated, and he thought he had almost extracted a promise from the Government that there should be some sort of improvement in that matter on the part of the Scotch Education Department. At present they had to go through a labyrinth of Minutes and counter Minutes. Minutes were issued, and they were followed after a certain interval by fresh Minutes which not only added important substantive information, but repealed preceding Minutes. In these circumstances it was altogether out of the question that Members of Parliament should be left to wade through these Minutes which deleted here and added there. They ought to be saved that labour by the Department addressing itself to the issue of a single volume which would make clear the position of matters to those interested in Scotch education. He was very glad indeed to tender his cordial thanks to his right hon. and learned friend for the speech he had made. He was also glad that the proceedings on the Scotch education debate had begun by what was in the nature of a Budget statement upon which they might go. He said that with all the more frankness because—he was sure he was expressing the feelings of every Scotch

Member—they might look now upon the Minute of the 28th May as of a merely temporary character. It appeared to him that if it had been other than temporary it would have involved principles of the most dangerous character on the administration of the equivalent grant. Even as a temporary arrangement for one year it was a most unfortunate step to take—to fling this money at the heads of the school managers in Scotland and tell them to do what they liked with it. They would regard it as manna descending from heaven, as gold coming, not from local resources, but from the Imperial Exchequer, and they would simply use it for the relief of the rates, and education would not be benefited to the extent of one penny.

His right hon. and learned friend had presented a very interesting contrast between the situation in Scotland educationally this year with that of last year. This Minute, involving on the one hand the distribution of over £200,000, and on the other the anticipation that there might be radical changes in the school system of Scotland in a very short time, induced him to ask the House to take a wider survey of the exact situation at this stage. They had now had thirty years experience of popular education in Scotland, and before this Minute came into operation they were entitled to ask whether the results of the system instituted in 1872 were not such as to justify the approval of the whole country. He confessed that if it were not that human nature was so constituted that, unless a subject was a matter of contention, the interest in that subject dwindled down, the figures presented would be of the greatest interest. He wished it to appear in the records of Parliament that this was how the matter stood as between 1872 and 1902. In thirty years this was the change which had come over the face of Scotland educationally. They must remember that there had been an increase of the population in that country during that time. In 1872 the population numbered 3,395,802, and in 1902 it had risen to 4,521,192, or an increase of over 30 per cent. Tested by that rise what had happened in the educational system of their country? During that time, leading up to the Minute now under consideration, what had been the increase in the school accommodation? In 1872 there was accommodation for 281,688 scholars; and in 1902 it had risen to 916,000, or an increase in thirty years, not of 30 per cent. as in population, but of no less than 230 per cent. The average attendance, he admitted, was, as the Lord Advocate had said, a better test than school accommodation. It was, in 1872, 213,000, and in 1901 it had risen to 642,000 scholars—an increase of about 200 per cent. Now, people in high quarters sometimes told them that they must not ascribe too much to the School Board system in Scotland, for it was the successor of a long anterior and popular system; but he was contrasting exactly the situation in which they found themselves with a modern popular and representative system as compared with the old system of heritors' management anterior to 1872.

There was another feature which he wished to deal with, and that was as to the teaching profession. Here he might say that, even contrasted with England, the figures of Scotch progress were striking in the highest degree. The number of assistant teachers, pupil teachers, and King's scholars, taken together, seemed not to have increased in any higher ratio than the population; but when they came to what all would admit was the best guarantee for efficient instruction, the number of certificated teachers, the figures were most remarkable and would be gratifying to any educational institute in the world. In 1872 the number of certificated teachers was 2,566; in 1902 it had risen to 11,524, being an increase of no less than 350 per cent. He was bound to say that when one looked at these figures, and thought of how Scotland was situated as to vast distances—a slender population with great difficulties in many districts of communication of one part with another—one could not but be gratified that the tradition of Scottish education had not only remained at its old height but had increased in such a manner as he had described. The increase in the number of certificated teachers in Scotland would favourably compare, and that in a striking degree, with that in England. He now came to the question of how the teachers had been financed under popular government. Their position was, on the whole, gratifying; because in 1872 the average salary of a schoolmaster, whether principal or assistant, was £101 6s. 7d., and it had risen during the thirty years to £146 0s. 11d. The average salary of a school mistress was, in 1872, £55 14s. 2d., and was now £72 6s. 3d. In fact, the salaries of the school masters, school mistresses, and assistants had increased by no less than 45 per cent. during that period. Might he just review these figures in brief? While the population of Scotland in thirty years had increased 30 per cent., the salaries of the teachers had increased 45 per cent., the school accommodation had increased by 230 per cent., the school attendance by 200 per cent., and the number of certificated teachers in actual employment in Scotland by 350 per cent. He held that that was a situation which ought to stand on their records as one with which the Scotch Members were highly gratified, and one which enabled them to say that the School Board system of Scotland—a system of representative and popular management by those who were intimately acquainted with the wants of the various localities—had been amply justified by results. During these thirty years they had had in every locality in Scotland a class of men brought up on this matter of education. He said so in view of many debates in the House. He did not think that the benefit to a country like Scotland could be over-estimated, that in every part of it, from the Shetland Islands to the Solway Firth, they could pick out men who, from long experience, had been inured and trained in this good work of education. These men had been friends of education and had vastly improved it. Thanks to the Scotch Education Department, he believed that, on the whole, the people of Scotland were highly satisfied with their educational system.

The ground of primary education had been entirely covered, and in these circumstances all he had said, or was permitted to say, was that he should look with the greatest dislike and disrelish upon any proposal to radically alter a system under which Scotland had so infinitely benefited. As to the Scotch Office he had no fear. He had no fear of his noble friend who was at the head of the Scotch Office. But there were two things which he did not like which were suggested by this Minute of 28th May. His noble friend was a member of a Government the record of whose achievements in education was one which no Scotsman liked. As to the result with regard to primary education, the ground had been covered; but with regard to secondary education, it was there, and there alone, that there was any confusion or need for specific assistance from the Department. All misapprehension should be removed from the public mind on that subject. In certain quarters the fallacy seemed to have been propagated, by some curious process, that secondary and technical education was the work of the County Councils, and that primary education was the work of the School Boards. That was an utter delusion. The School Boards of Scotland had taken up the honoured system which permitted them to handle not only primary but secondary education; and, to put it in a word, the Cockerton judgment would have been absolutely impossible in Scotland. No Scotch Judge would have been asked to settle the problem of when a child was not a child. That had been done year after year by the School Board with the approval of the Scotch Education Department and of the people of Scotland under the existing statute for the last thirty years. The finance of the matter illustrated that very clearly. There was directly paid to the School Boards of Scotland the sum of £800,000 per annum. There was indirectly paid through the County Council and the Borough Committees the sum of £139,000. That indirect payment filtered through the county bodies, which mainly controlled Scottish technical education only in the sense of being the paymasters through whom the funds from the Exchequer reached the managing bodies and the School Boards. So far as he had been able to judge Scottish opinion on education, the one note of dissatisfaction with regard to the financing of secondary education was that the County and Borough Councils, which received money to the amount of £79,000 this year, did not hand it all over for educational purposes, but abstracted, so to speak, £23,000 for the relief of the rates. That was a matter against which Scottish Members had protested year after year. They wanted education to get the benefit of this grant; and they wanted the power now exercised by the ocal authorities in the manner he had nentioned stopped. It was the old story of taking a body, which was not *ad hoc* out had general wants, and entrusting it with money which was *ad hoc*. In such cases it would always be found that in the process of transmission something was retained by the local authorities, with the result that the funds for education were o that extent depleted. In the latest Blue-book it was stated that the total amount of the residue grant was £79,000, of which only £56,000 was allocated for the purpose of technical education. Not only had the local authorities power to impound a portion of the amount, but they had power to impound the whole of it. That was a system which he did not think would receive sympathy in any quarter of the House. If a fund was to be devoted to education it should be spent on education, and the local authorities should not be in a position in which they could, as a matter of right, impound part or the whole of the fund for local purposes of their own, and to that extent deplete the educational exchequer.

MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY said that that only applied to sums under the Act of 1890.

*MR. THOMAS SHAW said he admitted that. The other sum was a sum of £60,000 which had been dealt with specifically by Parliament, and must be expended on education. What they wanted, in short, was to have one fund under the same fixed rule as the other, and make the whole amount available for education. With regard to the Minute it affected a sum of £212,000 per annum. He thought some of them could look back with not a little gratification upon the battle they had fought in past years with regard to the money due to Scotland for educational purposes. Year after year they had fought the question as a question of the right of Scotland, whether by equivalent grant, or by other means, to get adequate treatment relative to the amount spent in England on education. In an interesting debate on that subject on the 10th May, 1901, he himself took a prominent part in urging on the House to consider the question from the point of view of the rights of Scotland educationally, in view of the large grants given to education in England. Many of them thought that the then Chancellor of the Exchequer was a man of hard heart with regard to Scotland; but the right hon. Gentleman was defended by the Lord Advocate, and the Scottish Members struggled in vain. He was not now speaking by way of complaint. He was speaking in terms of extreme gratification, because the arguments they had used year after year had, like water dropping on a rock, at last worn away the obstacles against which they had to contend. He himself on that occasion said—

> "How was the argument that they were entitled to that large sum met. It was met by the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the effect that first of all the equivalent grant would disappear, and that Scotland need look no more for aid under that head."

His right hon. friend answered him on that occasion as follows—

> "It was said that the proper way was to make an arithmetical calculation and to give eleven-eighteenths of the amount given to England to Scotland. It was said that there were precedents for this; but the Chancellor of the Exchequer never admitted the principle of this claim, holding, on the contrary, that the principle of the equivalent grant in the matter of education was perfectly absurd."

What was "absurd" then was now seen to be sound sense. They had now got an equivalent in the sense that they received an amount in proportion to the population of Scotland as compared with the population of England. They had struggled for years for that; and he sincerely congratulated the Government, or rather the Scotch Department, on having been able to obtain from the present Chancellor of the Exchequer an arrangement which unfortunately they had failed for so many years to accomplish. Under that Minute Scotland was to have £212,000 per annum. The amount this year which was to be devoted to remedying the understaffed condition of the smaller schools (an object with which he sympathised) was to be trifling. His right hon. friend, with all the official information at his command, estimated it at only £25,000. Whatever other hon. Members might think, he was entirely in favour of the provision in the Minute for increasing the staffs of small schools in remote localities so as to enable them to furnish proper education irrespective of their distance from well equipped centres. But when he came to the second head of the Minute they were indeed in a very serious position. They found that a substantial balance, amounting to nearly £200,000, was to be distributed to School Boards and school managers in respect of day schools under their management which were on the list of schools conditionally entitled to share in the Parliamentary grant for education. Why should any of this money go to school managers of voluntary schools? They got very special treatment only a few years ago; and at the present moment they were enjoying the preferential treatment of a capitation grant of 3s. per scholar. In the second place, why should the Minute propose a limit as to the day schools? He should have thought that one of the very best things that School Boards could do would be to encourage the system of evening continuation schools. Perhaps there might be an explanation on that head; if so, he should be glad to hear it. He should have thought that the best way of proceeding would have been to hold the balance of the fund for a year until it could be distributed under a settled and fixed scheme. If it once got into the clutches, so to speak, of the local authorities, he feared there would be very considerable grumbling when they changed to another form of distribution. The education of Scotland ought to be protected by this Minute in so far as the distribution of that sum was concerned; and he hoped that a statement would go forth as the deliverance of the Government that this was a temporary arrangement only, and that in future local taxes would not be relieved from a fund which should be devoted to education. Otherwise, they would hereafter be met by grumbling and statements that they were dislocating local finance.

He regretted that, even with the information available, the Government did not treat more specifically the whole system of technical and secondary education in Scotland. They wanted a further allowance in the shape of distance grants. Under the county schemes they had a most admirable system of distance grants under which pupils from remote districts went to various centres, and, with the assistance of those grants, were encouraged to pursue the higher branches of education. He had hoped that such a scheme would be extended and enforced under the new Minute. They wanted a grant for secondary and technical education. They wanted evening schools and advanced classes on special subjects more particularly noticed in the educational Minutes. The time had come also when they ought to make large allowances for the purpose of building and properly equipping technical schools in Scotland. In many parts these were urgently needed, but the local authorities were debarred from establishing them owing to the enormous cost of equipping and establishing them. Specific grants for this purpose appeared for some reason to have ceased in 1886, and consequently the local authorities had been in the habit of borrowing, and had incurred a large indebtedness, and the fear of that operation not unnaturally deterred them from undertaking this necessary preliminary of a sound modern system of technical education. Galashiels might in all probability have had most excellent technical schools if it had not had to face such an expenditure and borrow money for them. One excellent public-spirited citizen would have given the ground for them, but the capital sum required for buildings and equipment could not be faced. He hoped the House would assist the Department by some expression of opinion in favour of the resumption of a capital grant, because since 1886 it was quite clear that the general opinion in Scotland was that a further improvement and development in the direction of technical education was most desirable. This was not a local matter. It was a national matter for Scotland. He had an instance in his mind which would illustrate that and give it point and luminosity. One of his most sagacious friends, a manufacturer, destined his three sons for his own business. He had them well trained in this country in the primary stages of education, but when he had to train them for his business, according to his ideas of what was best in the commercial and manufacturing world, what had he to do? He sent his eldest son to Crefeld, near Dusseldorf, to one of the best technical schools in Europe, to learn weaving; he sent his second son to Zimbach, in Saxony, to learn hosiery knitting; and his third to Verviers, in Belgium, to learn what was best in wool and yarn spinning. In order that his sons should be technically trained in his own trade in Scotland they had to be sent out of Scotland. He cited the case to show that a great deal had yet to be done in the direction of technical education for Scotland, and he hoped no Government would be content to have for Scotland anything but the best the world could produce in the way of education. He looked forward to the time when, instead of our sending our children to other countries of Europe to be educated, the people of Europe and America would send their children to us to obtain the most advanced forms of technical instruction,

*MR. SHAW-STEWART (Renfrewshire, E.) said he desired to dwell for a few moments on the Report of the Royal Commission on Physical Training, of which he had been a member. Physical exercises might be divided into two branches: the first physical exercises in the school, and the second games and recreation outside. The second part would depend on local and voluntary effort, but with regard to the provision for physical ex rcises in the school they would be glad to hear a little more with regard to the skilled Committtee now sitting, and they desired to be assured that the Department would see that the "Model Course" that the "skilled" Committee would draw up should be circulated throughout the country. But physical training could not be extended in all kinds of Schools without some carefully organised system of feeding the children. They could not call upon the pupils of the schools to undergo a systematic and increased course of physical training without being assured that they were sufficiently nourished to benefit by such training. It was a difficult problem, because in any provision that was made for the feeding of the children they must be careful not to interfere with parental responsibility. Much had been done by voluntary and charitable effort, but they ought not to depend on such chances. An authority should provide the mid-day meal, healthful and sufficient, to be paid for in fees by the parents of the children to be benefited. He hoped before the debate concluded many voices would be raised in favour of that recommendation. But granted they had a perfected system of physical exercises, and legislation for the regular and good feeding of the children, the evidence and the Report called loudly for a system of medical inspection. The Commission specially examined 1,200 children, from which examination various serious facts were adduced. Those facts were full of warning, but, on the other hand, if proper steps were taken to carry out the recommendations of the Report, the situation was full of hope. The Commission proposed that the medical officers of counties and boroughs should be appointed as consulting officers to the school authorities, their remuneration being paid out of Imperial funds to the extent of, say, £100 a year each, the amount varying according to the population and area. That also would require legislation. It was further proposed that district medical officers should be appointed to visit and report on the condition of the schools, to report on the condition of the pupils, and to certify as to infectious illness, such officers working with and being paid by the school authorities, helped perhaps by grants-in-aid. There should also be sub-inspectors.

THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN reminded the hon. Member that matters requiring special legislation could not be discussed on the Estimates.

*MR. SHAW-STEWART remarked that he had come to the last of the points requiring special legislation, but there were one or two matters of importance which were purely Departmental. If there was to be a thorough and universal system of physical training it had been abundantly proved that that training could best be given by the teachers themselves. But in order that the teachers should be able to give the instruction efficiently, it was necessary that they should be properly trained, and it was hoped that the Department would in future require that all teachers should go through a course of, and obtain a certificate for, physical training before they were admitted as teachers in any school. It was also recommended that there should be appointed by and attached to the Department, a special physical training inspection staff who, by scientific advice, would be able practically to aid the Department in setting up this national system of physical training. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be able to assure the Committee that such a staff would be appointed.

MR. DOUGLAS said that one reason why no sensational interest attached to Scotch education debates was that the Scotch Members held the simple creed that they believed in the Education Department. There were no public servants more efficient or devoted than the permanent officials of that Department. He desired, however, to call attention to a certain weakness in the administrative work of the office arising from the inadequacy of the consultation with Scotch opinion. One or two matters had come before the Committee in the course of the sitting which suggested that advantage might well be taken of a more organised system of consulting educational opinion in Scotland. There was, for instance, Circular 340, dealing with the subject of languages. It was of vital importance that nothing should be done which would in any way reduce the functions which secondary education discharged in leading up to the University, and providing for the tests which the University properly imposed. On the other hand, it was undeniable that a most undesirable feeling had been created that less importance attached to modern languages than to Latin, and the whole teaching profession of Scotland was united in condemning the particular methods by which the object in view had been sought. There was no lack of desire to make secondary education an effective avenue to the University, but it was desired that modern languages should continue to hold a place in the public estimation which would render them attractive subjects of study. Much difficulty in this matter might have been averted had there been full and deliberate consultation beforehand with persons interested in teaching. There was also Circular 374, with the object of which he deeply sympathised. No doubt the Department was placed in considerable difficulty when, by legislation favoured by the Government, but initiated by a private Member, a large number of children were put in a position which, for the time being, was absolutely paradoxical, and had to be dealt with. While he hoped that nothing would be done to delay the progress of the secondary education of those who were going to take the full course, it was obvious that the great majority of children between the ages of twelve and fourteen could not be asked to lose in useless studies one and a-half years of their time in the interests of the comparatively small number who were able to take secondary instruction. On the other hand, the circular and the code, excellent as their objects were, had been so devised that there was great difficulty in carrying them out. In this instance, it was clear that there had not been adequate consultation beforehand with those who were responsible for the conduct of the work and knew the conditions under which it had to be carried on.

Nobody was better able to speak on School Board administration in Scotland than Miss Flora Stephenson, Chairman of the Edinburgh School Board, and she had said that—

> "Recently there had come into the Department a spirit of change, which manifested itself in the issue of circulars in such bewildering number that it was difficult for ordinary mortals like School Board members and teachers to keep pace with the new regulations. Each circular modified or explained the one that had gone before. She suggested very humbly that 'My Lords' should give the School Board time to carry out one set of regulations and see how it worked before they overturned it by another."

That was surely a very simple demand. Miss Stephenson also expressed regret that—

> "The Department had ceased to communicate to the Board the full reports of the inspectors, which were of enormous help in enabling the Board to judge of the efficiency of each department of their schools."

Those statements, with the other circumstances to which he had referred, suggested a want of close and constant consultation between the Education Department and the local administrators. Yet another illustration was to be found in the Minute of 28th May, dealing with the general grant in aid. As to the grants to small schools, he hoped there would be little difference of opinion.

All would approve of the intention of bringing the small schools up to a proper level of efficiency, and every inducement should be offered to that end. He thought it was most unfortunate that pupil teachers should be employed in those small schools. It was unfortunate both for the pupils and the teachers, because they were not really receiving the kind of training and preparation which would be given them in large schools. Then there was the question of the position of the small schools which came below the level at which two masters could be employed. In the Highlands there was a strong case for considering whether further advantages could not be given to small schools. He thought it should be the object of the Committee to do all that was possible to advance education in a part of the country which he thought was not inferior to any other part of Scotland for obtaining good educational results. They might do something in the way of providing means of transport to schools which were farther away.

With reference to the second part of this grant he found himself in full accord with his hon. friend the Member for Hawick Burghs. He thought this was a most unfortunate disposition of the money, and some other way out of the difficulty ought to have been found. In view of the prospect of a very much overdue reconstitution of educational work in Scotland he thought this was particularly unfortunate. He trusted that by what the right hon. Gentleman had said he meant that this money would not be permanently earmarked for elementary education, but that it would be used to the utmost educational benefit for all purposes. The right hon. Gentleman said he believed this to be a very popular distribution of the money, but he had heard that it was most popular amongst those who cared least for education. He thought that after full consultation had been held with the people of Scotland, who knew most about educational administration, it would be found that this was not the direction in which they thought the money could best be disposed of even for a time. He was glad to hear that the Scottish Education Department had taken to itself a local habitation in Scotland. They all agreed that the more of this work they could find it possible to do in Scotland the better Scotch opinion would be pleased and the better would Scotch interests be served. He welcomed this departure and hoped a considerable advance might be made in this respect. He also approved of the purpose for which this partial removal had taken place, which was the intention of holding closer and fuller consultation with the persons he had named. He hoped that Scotch educational opinion might in the future, as in the past, be allowed to express itself clearly. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman upon the gratifying statement he had made.

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University) said he should not be so rash as to plunge into a general discussion on the Scotch Estimates. He had always been accustomed to look at education in Scotland with a considerable degree of admiration, because in Scotland the Education Acts appeared to have worked so smoothly, and so much satisfactory progress appeared to have been made. He was particularly struck with the statement about the number of certified teachers engaged in education as compared with the other teachers. The matter he wished to call attention to was one which concerned English schools just as much as Scottish schools, although the facts related entirely to Scottish children, and, perhaps, he would not be in order in dealing with this subject upon the English Estimates. What he wanted to call attention to was the enormous waste of public money spent upon education when the children were not fit to receive the instruction which was provided for them at so much cost. There was little use in Parliament and School Boards providing money for education unless they got into the schools children who were physically fit to receive instruction, and who could give some satisfactory return for the money expended upon them.

As regarded Scottish children a lurid light had been thrown upon the condition of affairs by the report of the Royal Commission on Physical Education in Scotland, and it was to that matter he wished to draw attention. That Commission came to the very wise conclusion in the early part of its inquiry, that before it could make any recommendations to Parliament as to the instruction to be given in Scottish schools it was necessary to make some investigation in regard to the physical condition of the children. After examining the various districts and the available information they appointed a small Sub-Commission, consisting of two very eminent doctors, Dr. Mackenzie and Professor Matthew Hay. This Sub-Commission was entrusted with the duty of taking a sample of Scottish children and reporting as to the nature of that sample. They addressed themselves with extreme ability to their task, and he recommended hon. Members who had not already done so to read their report. They arranged to take a sample of children from 600 schools in Aberdeen, 300 boys and a similar number of girls. They also took the same number in Edinburgh and submitted the children to a careful examination. They took these samples with very great care out of the Board Schools in various parts of those towns, so many from each, and they took them by lot or chance so as to get a fair sample of Edinburgh and Aberdeen children. The Commission seemed to have come to the conclusion that Aberdeen children were a fair sample of the children of the rural parts and the smaller and healthier towns of Scotland, and that the Edinburgh children were a fair sample of Glasgow, Dundee, and Edinburgh children. But the Edinburgh children were not entirely satisfactory. In Aberdeen, for instance, they found in poor health 5 per cent. of the whole number examined. In Edinburgh, however, the total in poor health was 19·17, or nearly one in five of the number examined. In the case of the Aberdeen children those suffering from bad nourishment totalled 9 per cent., whilst in the case of Edinburgh no less than 29·83 were suffering from insufficient nourishment. They found 8·8 per cent. of the children in Aberdeen, and 12·33 per cent. in Edinburgh suffering from mental dullness. There was one particular school in Edinburgh which they carefully examined. It was North Canongate Board School. It was the poorest of all those they examined, and he should certainly say that it was exactly the same kind of school as was to be found in the East End of London, in Bermondsey, or in the poor parts south of the Thames. They were struck by the extraordinary thinness of body and generally underfed condition of the boys. He was told that people who had seen London children were struck in exactly the same way. It was found that of 150 children in North Canongate school who were examined there were no less than 115 who lived in houses of not more than two rooms. Thirty lived in one-room houses, and eighty-five in two-room houses.

In the general Report upon this school the medical examiners said—

> "A large minority, if not the majority, of the North Canongate school children are habitually underfed and underclothed."

Of the children examined they found 38 per cent. were suffering more or less from insufficient nutrition. What an awful idea it was that in so many of these schools a large minority, if not a majority, of the children were habitually underfed and underclothed. How was it possible to raise an Imperial race if that was the general character of the children in a large number of our schools. The medical men made this very important recommendation, which he wished earnestly to press upon the Committee—

> "Physical exercise unsupported by adequate food and adequate clothing must result in early physiological exhaustion and infirmity."

If the children in the schools were inadequately fed and clothed, and were unfit for physical instruction, they were still more unfit for mental instruction. They found with regard to eyesight that of the children in Edinburgh schools no less than 31·57 per cent. had defective eyes which often interfered with their school work. If these children were not attended to they would grow up and be defective workmen and citizens. There were 42 per cent. of these children with defective hearing which interfered with their efficiency in the school. Altogether they found that no less than 70 per cent. of the children examined in Edinburgh were suffering from some kind of disease or other. The medical gentlemen made this observation—

> "Even if we assume that half the diseases found were such as not themselves to interfere with school efficiency—and this is much too

large an assumption since any affection of ear, or throat, or heart, or lung, tends to interfere with efficiency all through the daily life—we should still have some 35 per cent., that is 10,500 children (among the 30,000) with some affection demanding more or less attention."

That would give the Committee a very good idea of what was to be found in these reports, and he commended them to everybody's attention. They shocked him when he read them. He thought they were the most appalling he had ever read, and if anything like that state of things existed in the great schools in England, then the condition of our children was rotten, and ought to have the immediate attention of everyone who desired to see this country great and prosperous.

As to the remedy, let him impress upon the Committee a recommendation which was made by the Royal Commission on this point. The hon. Baronet who spoke earlier in the debate had referred to it in his speech. It seemed to him that the first thing they had to do to correct this state of things in the schools, was to find out the facts. Why should it not be a part of the duty of every teacher to make a sort of inspection of the children in the school every day. The teacher would be able to pick out any serious case of disease, or any serious defect in hearing or eyesight, or anything which was calculated to interfere with the school work of the children. They would be able to detect anything like over-work, and also if the children were too tired to do their school work. Why should not the teachers, who were called upon to make all sorts of ridiculous returns, which were of no use to anybody, make this inspection? Besides that, there ought to be at the public expense in every one of our schools a periodical medical examination of the children. There were charitable societies which sent nurses round some of the schools, but it ought not to be left to a charitable society or a local authority. It should be prescribed by Imperial authority that the children in all schools should have the required periodical medical examination. Some children who were found to be suffering from deafness and phthisis were undergoing severe physical exercises even in the best Edinburgh schools which were examined. If there was a daily examination by the teacher he would be able to find out the worst cases, and if there was a medical examination periodically, they should then know what the condition of the children was. He would state what appeared to him to be the duty of the State in the way of providing properly for the children. Of all things required by a young child, the most important was not food, but fresh air. Children required very little food provided that they had fresh air. What was the state of ventilation in the schools? Anybody who had visited the schools to any great extent, as he had done when he was an official connected with the Board of Education, knew that the air in the schools was a great deal fouler than outside, and wholly unfit for children to breathe. Attention was called to this by the Royal Commission, which said that special attention should be paid to the too frequent neglect of the proper ventilation of schools. Most elaborate rules were laid down about the building of schools, and every possible provision made for ventilation, but all these rules were of no use unless the teachers and managers kept this ventilation in proper operation. He knew that very often the ventilation was stopped by the teachers because the school was too cold. Although cold was less deleterious than foul air, it was more unpleasant. He was afraid that some of the inspectors were chilly old gentlemen, and that they did not attend as they ought to do to the question of ventilation of schools.

Some years ago there was a scientific inquiry into the condition of schools conducted by Dr. Bayley, of Owen's College Manchester. He examined four schools in Manchester, and one higher grade school in Salford. He classed the schools in regard to ventilation into five classes, according to the degree of foul air and smell in the various schools. There were none in the first or second class; there were only two in the third class, and the class-rooms in the fourth were reported to have "air very oppressive, giving rise to headache." Three schools were distinctly worse, "the odour, in the class-rooms especially, simply unbearable." The evidence was still more precise in regard to defective ventilation. The air in the schools was tested for carbonic acid gas. The standard accepted in hospitals was that if there were more than six parts in 10,000 of carbonic acid gas, the air was adjudged polluted. There was not one of these schools which was within the unpolluted zone; the owest school had seven parts, and in the class-rooms ten parts in 10,000, and the highest had no less than 12·8 parts, and 14·5 parts in 10,000 in the class-rooms. The schools were also tested for micro-organisms, and, whereas pure mountain air was quite free from micro-organisms and Paris streets contained 25 per cubic foot, it was found in the Granby Row School, Salford, that in the infant school there were 213, in the boys' school 236, and in the girls' school 286 micro-organisms per cubic foot.

MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us how many micro-organisms per cubic foot are found in the House of Commons?

SIR JOHN GORST said he did not know. He thought the Committee would agree that fresh air was a necessity of life, and it ought to be supplied in the schools. Then the Committee would agree also that at all hazards the children must be fed before they were taught. If they were not fed, as Dr. Mackenzie said, they were not only doing no good by their education, but actually injuring the child. The teacher knew as well as possible which children came to school without having had their breakfast. How were the children to be fed? There were charitable agencies which fed as many children as their means permitted. He had been very much amused once when, after one of his speeches in the House in regard to the necessity of feeding the children, a lady interested in one of these charitable societies wrote to the Duke of Devonshire complaining that his speech was calculated to injure her charitable society. He did not want to say one word against these charitable societies; let these agencies feed the children if they could, but if they could not, the State must see that the children were fed. That was the fundamental fact on which all administration and practice should go. He did not want to undervalue parental responsibility. By all means let them make the parent responsible; there was no reason why the cost of feeding the children should not be exacted from the parent. There were two classes of parents who sent their children to school unfed. One was the careless parent; the mother was drunk, perhaps, the night before, and would not get up to give the child breakfast. Such parents ought to be dealt with very sternly and punished, and if examples were made of some of the worst cases, the carelessness would probably diminish. The other class of parents could not feed their children because they were poor and had not the means to give them food, and these ought to be dealt with with great tenderness. He did not himself object to the State feeding those children; but at any rate they could be referred to the relieving officers under the Poor Law. The advice he gave applied to England and Wales as much as to Scotland.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) said that they had had a very interesting statement about the progress of Scotch education from the Lord Advocate, supplemented by another interesting statement by his hon. and learned friend the Member for Hawick Burghs, covering the last thirty years, and followed up by an extremely interesting speech by the right hon. Member for Cambridge University, in which he had brought his large English experience to bear on the question of education in Scotland. The question of physical culture and training was of no less importance to England than to Scotland, and he believed that the facts which had been disclosed by the Royal Commission in regard to Edinburgh showed a state of things no worse than that which prevailed in the densely-populated cities of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and the Midlands. He quite agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University that it was idle to attempt to give mental training to children imperfectly fed. Children whose nutrition was in an imperfect state were incapable of receiving instruction profitably, but their brain power was actually made worse, so that in time, instead of contributing anything to society, they became a charge upon it. And no class was more prone to intemperate habits than those people who were imperfectly nourished and had weak brains. In Scotland this was really a growing evil. He had no doubt that the conditions in the lower parts of Edinburgh and Glasgow were worse forty years ago than now, but in Scotland the city population was increasing at an enormously more rapid ratio than the country population. The rural population of Scotland was diminishing, not only in the Highlands, where there had been enormous clearances of the people to make great deer forests, but in many of the agricultural districts. By far the largest part of the growth of population in Scotland was developed in the county of Lanark and in the neighbourhood of Glasgow. The question of the condition of the city children attained greater importance every year, as the city populations increased. He asked the Lord Advocate whether the Scottish Education Department would take steps to carry out some of the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Some of these recommendations might require legislation. But the Department could produce circulars and Minutes, and he hoped their untiring energy in that respect might be applied to the endeavour to carry out those recommendations which did not require legislation, such as the appointment of committees on physical training on each School Board.

With regard to the Equivalent Grant, for years past they had been in a difficulty owing to their not having in any clear and compendious form a statement of the public documents and instructions under which these grants were administered. He hoped the Scottish Office would issue a concise statement on this matter. Not one member of the Committee besides the Lord Advocate, excluding, of course, his hon. friend the Member for Mid Lanark, carried all the details in his mind, and it would be a great help to weaker spirits if they had the details provided for them. He believed his hon. friend the Member for Mid Lanark was prepared to argue that Scotland was not receiving as much as it was entitled to; but he would not forestall the exhaustive statement which he was sure the Committee would have from his hon. friend. With reference to the question of supplementary courses, the Code contained a new provision on that subject. That provision had excited a great deal of criticism, and even some alarm in Scotland. The best evidence of the alarm it had excited was to be found in the fact that the Permanent Secretary to the Scotch Board of Education went to Scotland and made a speech in defence of the scheme. They had all read that speech with much interest; and they had also read some of the criticisms passed on the scheme. He did not think that the scheme deserved all the severe criticism bestowed upon it. He thought the prolongation of school life did furnish a reason for some additional courses, in order to fill up the time during which children were kept at school. But there was a tendency to induce specialisation at an early age. Speaking broadly, more could be accomplished with the minds of children by giving them general education up to the age of thirteen or fourteen years than by giving them technical education. There was a dangerous tendency in that direction. He was far from saying that the system could not be worked in such a way as to avoid that evil. He hoped that the Department would take care to work it in that sense; for it was susceptible of that evil, and it was susceptible of discouraging general education in the interests of secondary and higher grade education; very little was done for the children by introducing them to special work for which their age and attainments did not fit them. Their experience was that it was better to give general education to children, and that more would be gained in the long run by doing that than by carrying them at once into what was to be the business work of their lives.

There had been some discussion with reference to the Minute of the 28th of May last, which was issued by the Scotch Education Department. That Minute was really very important, more important than would appear from what the Lord Advocate had said. The right hon. Gentleman said it was only a temporary measure, but it was a temporary measure which might tend to make itself permanent. It consisted of two parts. The first part alluded to certain sums of money for schools in thinly peopled districts where the numbers were small, and where the average rendered it difficult to maintain adequate staffs of competent teachers. The total sum to be expended was very much less than half the sum of £212,000 to be expended under the Minute. He understood that only about

£50,000 per annum was to be devoted to that purpose. That left a sum of £162,000 to be expended under the second part of the Minute. The second part of the Minute was really a gift in aid of rates. It was simply taking money allocated to Scotland as the equivalent to what had been given for education in England and expending it in aid of the rates. Money was to be spent to relieve ratepayers which otherwise would be spent on the schools. Of course there was a precedent for that in the grant of 1890. As his hon. friend had said, the bulk of the Scottish Members had never ceased to protest against the practice of allowing this educational money to be spent in the relief of rates. The gain to the small ratepayer was hardly appreciable, but the loss to the community was considerable, because the schools were not able to provide the education which they ought to provide. In the case of the English Bill of last year, they succeeded in carrying a provision, by which money which had hitherto been given in aid of the rates was hereafter to be entirely given for the purposes of education. That was forced on the Government by discussion in this House, and ultimately passed with general consent, because it was felt it would be a great educational gain. They should like to do that in Scotland also, and take the whole of the money under the Act of 1890 and apply it to educational purposes. [Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: Hear, hear!] He had the consent of the Lord Advocate himself. Why, therefore, should they take the new educational fund and apply it in aid of the rates? If they now wished to withdraw from such an application a fund which was unfortunately liable to be diverted to the rates, how much more should they endeavour to have the new fund devoted to education. [Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY said the arrangement was only temporary.] The Lord Advocate said that the arrangement was only temporary, but there was an old proverb about taking butter out of a dog's mouth. If the money were given to the ratepayers now, it would be more difficult to withdraw it and apply it to education later, than would otherwise be the case. He thought the Education Department would have been better advised if they had allotted the money in almost any other way. He was aware that it could not be accumulated, but it might be allotted in respect of work done to the satisfaction of the Scotch Education Department. He thought they had a real reason to complain that money which in England was given to education should in Scotland be diverted from that purpose. If the money was to go to any educational purpose, it should be spent in some way which would secure benefit to the schools and the children. It might be expended in giving better staffs, or giving additional subsidies, or in some way or another which would be a benefit to the education of the country. It might be said that it was only a question of one year, but the Committee should remember that although the Lord Advocate spoke hopefully of an Education Bill for Scotland next year—it was a hope they had conceived for many years, and which had been as long delayed—who could tell what they might be engaged in discussing next session, when new questions of great gravity were being raised. He did not wish to acquiesce in anything which was wrong now in the hope that it might be set right next year. He should be glad to know if there was any possibility of having the second part of the Minute altered. and the money devoted to real educational benefits.

With regard to the future, he would only say that the statement they had from the Lord Advocate was a very satisfactory testimony to the working of the Scottish system. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University spoke of the pleasure with which he listened to debates on Scottish education. The right hon. Gentleman was an educationalist, but he doubted whether many other English Members experienced any such pleasure. The right hon. Gentleman might, however, have complimented them on the concord which attended their debates on education, and on the absence of that religious difficulty which gave animation to English debates on education. From that source of friction they hoped to be free; and reviewing the progress of education in Scotland, they might feel that with regard to the progress made in the past, both before and after the Act of 1872, it was an indication that there were two lines on which they should proceed if they wanted to keep the education of the country abreast with the times. The first was to follow the lines on which they had hitherto worked, and make education in Scotland everywhere popular, and everywhere under popular control. The other was to associate Scottish education, as much as possible, with the general interests of the Scottish people, and he thought that that might well be increased by associating it more with Scotland itself. He listened to what the Lord Advocate said as to the intention of the Scotch Education Department to do more and more of its work in Edinburgh, and to give the people of Scotland a more ample opportunity of knowing what was being done. If the Lord Advocate could see his way to form, as could be done by Minute, something in the nature of a consulting body representing Scottish opinion, which would be a means of communication between Scottish opinion generally and the Department, which would focus Scottish opinion and give an opportunity to those who followed the progress of Scottish education of bringing their views to bear on the Department, he thought the right hon. Gentleman would be doing something for which Scotland would be grateful, and from which they might expect still further progress. He thought if education in Scotland had been kept in advance of education in other parts of the United Kingdom, it was very largely because they had the element of popular control; and he felt sure that in any measure which might hereafter be submitted to Parliament the feeling of Scotland in that respect would be fully recognised.

SIR CHARLES RENSHAW (Renfrewshire, W.) congratulated the Lord Advocate on the statement he had been able to submit with regard to Scottish education. He confessed he shared the views of the hon. Member for the Border Burghs with regard to the Minutes issued, and he would suggest that they wanted the two additional circulars from the Scottish Education Department to which the hon. Member referred. The condition of the Scottish Education Department was at the present time alarmingly complex and difficult for anyone who desired to find out the funds available, and the Minutes that had to be studied made the difficulty almost insuperable. He hoped next year they might have legislation to place Scottish education in a more satisfactory condition than it was at present. With regard to the money coming to Scotland under the Equivalent Grant, and to the course to be taken with regard to the appropriation of it under the peculiar circumstances of the moment, and the prospect of further legislation, he hoped it would be understood that the fact that this money was now to be used to some extent in the relief of rates would not militate against its being used for other purposes when the Bill to be brought in was made an Act. One of the difficulties which presented themselves on the occasion of the passing of the last Education Act for Scotland was the consideration of the rates, and he hoped steps would be taken in the promised measure to avoid a similar difficulty cropping up. He approached the question of foreign language education dealt with in the circular issued in January last year (No. 340) not from an educational point of view but that of an employer of labour, and he regarded that circular as one of the most mischievous and unfortunate circulars ever issued by the Department. Having regard to the work that was going on and to the immense importance to Scotland as an industrial country that they should have an increasing number of young men thoroughly educated in German and French, the slight that had been put on those languages by that circular was most undesirable. The reason for issuing the circular was to him inconceivable. He did not believe they would get a more accomplished German and French scholar because he was taught a smattering of Latin. He strongly pressed the Education Department to give greater facilities for the learning of French and German than were given at the present time.

With reference to the remarks made by the hon. Member for the Border Burghs as to the county authorities being only authorities to receive this money, the hon. Member would find, if he were a member of a county authority, that the work devolved on them, not only in regard to the inception of schemes but also in seeing them carried out, was very heavy indeed. They owed a debt of gratitude to the county authorities of Scotland for the way in which they had carried out these duties. He was surprised at the hon. Member complaining of the amount of money to be spent under the second provision of the Minute of 11th May, in aid of voluntary schools. If the money was public money given to Scotland as an equivalent to the money taken by England last year to relieve the rates of the great expense involved by the Education Act, surely it was right the Roman Catholics and others associated with the public school work in Scotland should take their share. He certainly did not think it was right that they should be excluded from participating in this money. It was a very strange thing to him that when so large a sum as £212,000 was for the first time to be expended on education in Scotland, no legislation should be necessary. He did not think that was a desirable state of things. The House ought to have a stronger hand than they had, in one afternoon of this kind on the discussion of the Estimates, over these matters.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) said it was quite obvious that if the highly trained mind of the talented head of the Edinburgh School Board was not able to assimilate the documents issued by the Scottish Board of Education, there was no chance of such simple persons as himself doing so. He thought a digestible extract should be made of all these Minutes and circulars, so that they might be understood by all. He was in rather an unfortunate position, because, although he was largely in agreement with the Lord Advocate, he could not help thinking that the Government had burnt their fingers quite enough over Education Bills in other parts of the world, to make it desirable not to continue that disagreeable process with so thorny a subject and so thorny a people as the Scotch. A most excellent document, entitled "Suggestions for Supplementary Courses," with every word of which he agreed, set forth the methods pursued by the Scotch Education Department in filling up the educational hiatus between the ages of twelve and fourteen. He was rather in favour of specialisation, and had never been able to see why certain specialised subjects should not have as high an educative value as some of the vaguer subjects of education. Surely a study of botany, chemistry, or natural history was as informing to the mind as a course of reading in Aristotle or Horace? What schoolboys resented more than anything else was being compelled to go through courses which would have no bearing whatever on their after life. They desired to get to close quarters with something which would be of practical benefit to them, and he did not blame them. He was glad to see that the document to which he referred laid down a series of suggestions in the direction of giving a certain amount of practical training to lads between twelve and fourteen. There had been some talk about the constitution in Edinburgh of a new Board for educational purposes. He was not at all in favour of Boards in Edinburgh; his inclination was to the abolition rather than the creation of such bodies. The Board of Supervision had gone into the limbo of all absurd and useless things, and a Committee was at present trying to discover the benefits which were being derived from the Board of Manufactures. Boards were usually constituted by the appointment of the Lord Provost, the Lord of Session, a couple of bailiffs, and one or two of the miscellaneous people who were always hanging about Edinburgh looking for a job. Meetings were then held at stated intervals or otherwise; the ornamental men did no work, and the duties fell into the hands of the more or less competent, but generally incompetent, people not altogether unconnected with Parliament House in Edinburgh. It would be extremely inconvenient to run down to Edinburgh to get work done. It was much better to go to Dover House and see Sir Henry Craik, who was always extremely obliging and courteous, and who, if he could not do what was desired, wrote most plausible letters with which Members could usually satisfy their constituents. Moreover there were two appeals—to Lord Balfour of Burleigh and the Lord Advocate—and altogether questions affecting the Department could be effectually dealt with. Therefore, unless good reason could be shown, they had better go on as they were doing.

As to physical training, he considered the Commission had presented an epoch-making report. The results of the investigation and examination which had been made demanded the most serious consideration. The physical quality of the people was rapidly deteriorating. The Inspector-General of Recruiting had declared that out of 12,000 recruits examined by him 31 per cent. were rejected for physical defects—400 for defective sight, 600 for being under height, 600 for being under weight. That showed that the physical quality of the nation was deteriorating, and unless something were done we should not be able, in time of need, to meet our foes in the field as well as we used to do. In the examination of school children, there were found numbers of cases of eye, ear, throat, and heart disease, and tuberculosis. As to the under-feeding, that was not a new question, as some years ago Sir James Crichton Browne instituted a series of investigations in connection with the London Board schools, and found that a very large proportion of the scholars attended school having had no breakfast. He recollected the way in which the personal work of this gentleman was received by the House. This gentleman's Report laid down the fact that a great proportion of the children were underfed. He was told that the children who were well fed did their work very much better and were much brighter. The question of housing was also very important. He did not think that the young men at the universities got enough physical training. The curriculum was so full that there was not time between one class and another to take the necessary exercise. There was not nearly sufficient physical training at the Universities, and in the schools they wanted more fresh air. If people had good fresh air they wanted less food. They heard a good deal about the schoolmaster being the proper person to carry on physical training. He would point out, however, that under-fed children could not stand much physical training as well as their mental work. In London, where they had Sandow exercises for the children, they contracted heart disease under the strain of that particular work. He would like to say that it was with great satisfaction that he heard the decision of the Education Department that they intended establishing a Departmental Committee to draw up the rules and regulations under which physical training should be carried on. He hoped they would also have a medical examination of the schools, which he thought was very much required. The London School Board employed a highly-qualified medical man to go round the schools to see that they were kept in a proper sanitary condition, and properly ventilated. He thought in Scotland that the medical officer of health for the district would be the proper man to do this duty, and they might pay him an additional £100 a year. He congratulated the Lord Advocate upon the speech he had just delivered, and he also wished to congratulate the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University upon his admirable speech, for by that speech he had rendered an enormous service to this important question.

SIR MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbrightshire) said that after all the best security that the children were well looked after was to be found in the schoolmaster himself. Whatever rules and regulations they might lay down in regard to the health of the children, the whole question depended very largely upon the schoolmaster. Some schoolmasters cared very little for the health of the children, and were more anxious that they should do well at examinations. He had had some experience in these matters, and he had been told that he was the oldest chairman of School Boards in Scotland. In his own parish he had always taken an active interest in the rural schools, and also in the work of the large School Board of which he was a member. Some fault had been found with the Minute of the 28th May, and he should like to know why that money should not be used to assist the rates. In the country they had a very heavy rate to pay for education, and they spared no expense, and they did everything they could to make the schools efficient. Nevertheless there was always something fresh to be done, and surely they would be justified in using a portion of the money in lessening the rate. In his part of the country there was a very industrious, well-informed, and well-educated class of persons working as shepherds. Those men had constantly to leave good situations, where they had been for many years, in order to go into the villages to get their children properly educated. Could no funds be found to enable them to send their children to villages where there were better schools? They did not object to walk five or six miles, but some of them were twelve or thirteen miles away from such schools. Men who had devoted their whole lives to shepherding could not easily find new occupations, and to shift with all their families into some wretched two-roomed house in a village was very hard upon them. He should like some information collected from the School Board, or any other source, as to the number of people in this particular position in their respective parishes. In that way the Government would obtain some idea of the number of families who desired assistance, and also the number of children who ought to be educated, and who were receiving a very scanty training at the present moment. A complaint had been made that the Board of Education was not always accessible, but he had not heard that complaint before. He had always found, in his own experience, that questions connected with Scotch education were always willingly and readily answered. He did not know what was looming in the future, but although the House might be tired of educational matters, he thought they would have an Education Bill for Scotland next session. He had no objection to School Boards, and he did not think they could do better than establish them in their large parishes, but when he found that the same persons were members of the School Board, the Parish Council and the County Council, then he began to ask why they should have three separate elections to elect them. In a good many cases they were practically the same men, and generally they were the best men the ratepayers could find. This happened in a great number of rural parishes in Scotland. One difficulty in continuing the present School Board system was that there was no appeal for the teachers. At the present time when teachers were wronged there was no appeal, and he thought there should be somebody to whom an appeal could be made. He joined in the congratulations offered to the Lord Advocate in regard to the satisfactory policy which the Government had adopted in regard to education in Scotland.

*Mr. BLACK (Banffshire) thought it was to be regretted that the hon. Member for Kirkcudbright had not joined in the almost univeral expression of opinion from both sides of the House in appealing to the Lord Advocate with reference to the Minute of 28th May, and more particularly with reference to the proposal to devote this very large sum in relief of rates and voluntary subscriptions, instead of increasing efficiency in education. He reminded the Committee that the sum at stake was a very large one. It was almost as much as the sum involved in what had been a great bone of contention in Scotland for the last fifty years, namely, the application of the teinds to the payment of Ministers in Scotland. The whole of the teinds represented £240,000 and here they were dealing with a sum nearly as great. Before many years were passed, probably next year, the whole question of education in Scotland would be in the melting-pot, and it would be the duty of the Government then in office to deal with it. It was of the utmost importance that a sum so large, and sufficient for the purpose of freeing education from the bottom of the ladder to the top, should be applied *ad interim* in such a way as not to make it difficult to apply the funds for secondary education and in increasing efficiency. It was true this Minute was only temporary in its application, but what was temporary really tended to become permanent if it were repeated year after year, and the net consequence of the Minute was to make it difficult for any Government which had to deal comprehensively with the subject of education to carry out any comprehensive scheme for secondary education because they would be met with the necessity of imposing an additional rate after the ratepayers had tasted blood in the shape of a remission to the extent of a fourth or a fifth of what they already paid. The Minute seemed to be worse in regard to the voluntary schools. If the Minute is as stated by the Lord Advocate temporary and is afterwards withdrawn, these voluntary schools would be in a very evil case, because in the meantime the springs of voluntary subscription would have dried up, but if it were permanent they were going to give to these voluntary schools the whole sum required for their maintenance without imposing any condition as to their control, and they would find great difficulty in asking these voluntary schools to submit themselves to appropriate control. There was a great deal to be done in this country in regard to technical education, and it would be a very proper application of this grant to make it applicable to the founding of technical schools throughout Scotland in suitable centres. Germany retained her supremacy not on account of protection, but on account of technical education, and if we were to retain our supremacy we must follow the same line. Referring to the very defective teaching of history in Scotch schools, the hon. Member said that the Treaty of Union provided that the kingdoms joined together be known by the common name of Great Britain. In Scotch schools they found continually that the books used were books which referred, not to Great Britain but to only one part of the kingdom. In "The Britannia History Readers. Book II.," used in the Glasgow High School, treating of the period of George III., and therefore after the Union, they found the following sentences:—

> "Soon afterwards Spain joined in the war against England, chiefly because she wanted to get back Gibraltar. England was in very great danger. The French and Spanish fleets sailed up and down the Channel, and there was no English fleet strong enough to fight them. Before long England was also at war with Holland."

He might multiply instances indefinitely, but it was sufficient to say this was quite a common habit, and a very objectionable habit. The remedy was twofold. The Board of Education employed inspectors, and if the Board of Education indicated to these inspectors that this misuse of terms would be treated as any other inaccuracy in history, that might have a material effect on the teachers of history. The other remedy was in the Leaving Certificate Examination. He was told that out of twenty-two questions in history set in the examination with regard to a period before the Union, only one related to Scotch history. It would be very appropriate in Scotland, at all events, that a large proportion should be devoted to that important department of history.

SIR J. STIRLING-MAXWELL (Glasgow, College) said he would like to join in the appeal to the Government to take steps at once to carry out the recommendations of Lord Mansfield's Commission, and especially the recommendation with regard to the medical examination of children. He urged that steps should be taken in that direction, not next year, or next month, or next week, but to-morrow morning. He also desired to call the attention of the Government to the Report of the Committee that inquired into the question of Forestry. The work of that Committee, which was appointed by the Board of Agriculture, might not seem germane to the question they were now discussing, but the Report of the Committee referred to the importance of furthering education in regard to this very important industry. Though the Agricultural Department was active, he could not help feeling that this was a purely educational matter, and that there would be much better hope of seeing something done if the alertness and power of initiative which the Education Department had shown in regard to so many subjects were applied also to this.

*MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) said the Lord Advocate, in his most interesting statement indicating that so many things had been done, that so many things were being done, and that very shortly there was every reason to hope other things would be dealt with, showed that they were living at a time of extraordinary educational interest. He earnestly joined in the hope already expressed that another year would not go by without the Government being able to bring in the too-long-delayed Bill to co-ordinate education in Scotland. So much had been done lately through the acts of the Department, that the hon. Member for West Renfrewshire seemed to think that they had almost superseded Acts of Parliament. The educational policy had to a great extent altered, and would in future be still further altered, without adequately coming under the review of Parliament, and, according to a great authority at the Table, one of the main functions of Parliament was to maintain the efficiency of the public Departments. He failed to see how there was any representative control over the education policy of Scotland. That was to a large extent based on the Code, and memoranda upon Minutes and upon circulars. It was entirely against the spirit of the Constitution that Parliament should have so little control over so important a matter as the policy of education in Scotland. Under the present system, it could hardly be said that they were living under representative control. He expressed gratitude for what had been done through the agency of the Department in regard to the Report of the Royal Commission on physical education. He thought that the Department could help the School Boards by making known the best system of ventilation in schools. That had not been neglected by the teachers, many of whom were keen for ventilation, which was, in some cases, deplorable, especially in the landward schools. The real difficulty was to get a cheap and efficient system both of ventilation and sanitation. He believed that a good sanitary inspector of the class of a first-class clerk of works would be infinitely more useful than the ordinary inspector of schools, whose time was taken up with the literary condition of the schools. As to cooking, what was wanted was a shed and the necessary apparatus. The recommendations of the Commission on Physical Training were admirable, and he congratulated the members of the Commission on what they had done, in the public interest, in the preparation of their Report. He believed that the Swedish model was the best. In the Folkschûle, the instruction was given by the teachers, but in the secondary schools the training was given by drill instructors, out-of-doors in summer and indoors in winter. Provision should be made for the training of the teachers in physical drill, but until that had been done it would be of advantage to have professional instructors in schools and training colleges.

He shared the dislike expressed by hon. Members as to the distribution of so large a sum of money in the way of relief of rates. That was a very unhappy prelude to the proposed scheme of co-ordination of education in Scotland promised for next year. The money might have been set aside to spend on technical buildings and other necessary educational works. The proposed provision of grants to small schools to increase their staff was much needed in some of the sparsely populated districts, but, at the same time, that, in some cases, would prejudice the question of the suggested new system of control of education. He was sure that a great many of these side schools had been erected only through the jealousies of the different parishes. There was not a sufficiently strong educational authority to properly distribute the schools throughout the country side. The parish area was not a good one, educationally speaking. It should be much larger. The *ad hoc* election of the education authority was in consonance with the popular desire in Scotland, and it would work well if there were larger areas. If there was a difficulty about popular representation it would be got rid of by the payment of the travelling expenses of the members of the School Boards; and he was in favour of the system carried out in America and in Massachusetts of conveying free the children from the outlying districts to central schools, instead of maintaining inefficient side schools. He was in favour of specialising the education of children. But to do so between twelve and a half and fourteen years of age was to specialise in primary education, and it was unfortunate that that specialisation should have been made without taking the judgment of Parliament. He strongly urged that some means should be found by which, when action was taken by the Department in such directions, Parliament should be consulted. He welcomed the concession that had been made that the Education Department should be more fully represented than it had been in Edinburgh. He thought that the Department had been out of touch with Parliament on the one side, and with the public opinion of

Scotland on the other. "My Lords" of the Education Department in London could not, from the nature of their position, be interested in the proceedings of the Department. It was impossible for the Prime Minister or the Home Secretary and the other official members of the Board to make an effective Board of Control. Such a Board should be composed of the best educational talent of Scotland, sitting in Edinburgh, to direct the educational policy of Scotland. He could not agree with his hon. friend the Member for West Aberdeen that this was a case for letting well alone. It was, he acknowledged, difficult to criticise, on occasion, a Department so much of whose work one approved, without being able to present under the rules of debate an alternative policy; but he believed that there was a case for some great change in the direction of controlling the educational administration of Scotland effectively by Parliament. He agreed with the saying of an authority not unfriendly to the Department, that—

> "The Scottish people, through their fit representatives, should have more power of initiation and more right of control in regard to their own education."

That was the object to which they should aim; the institution of a Board of Control in Edinburgh, without which there would be very little control either here or elsewhere over the bureaucracy at Dover House.

MAJOR SEELY (Isle of Wight) said he would not have ventured to intervene in the debate had he not been one of the witnesses before the Royal Commission on Physical Training. In his opinion, that Commission did not receive all the consideration it deserved. The result of its investigations had been so startling that he ventured to express the hope that the Lord Advocate would not lose sight of its recommendations. He wished to refer to the urgency of carrying out certain of those recommendations, such as the medical inspection of school children, with a view to ascertaining whether or not the race was degenerating, and degenerating quickly, especially in the towns. Many of the witnesses urged most strongly on the Commission that if this country was to maintain its Army and Navy, and in fact if the Empire was to be maintained at all, it was absolutely essential that the children should be trained in the schools. The Committee was unanimous that some change was essential; but its recommendations were met with the appalling answer that a large proportion of the children were so hungry that they could not possibly benefit by physical training or mental training either. There was a recommendation in the Report that parents who did not feed their children should either be charged a fee, or should apply to the Poor Law; and he would respectfully suggest to the Lord Advocate that that was a matter which he should urge by every means in his power. It was certain that if they wished to maintain the Army and Navy they should train the children in the schools, and it was equally certain that if they trained them they would have to feed them also. Who believed it possible that in one of the greatest cities in the kingdom one-third of the children attending the primary schools were so hungry that it was impossible to train them. That was a state of affairs that was a disgrace to civilisation. He would urge his right hon. friend not to lose sight of this matter, which was one of profound importance.

*MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire) said he desired to associate himself with the remarks which had been made by several hon. Gentlemen about the plethora of circulars and Minutes issued by the Department. He wished to make a suggestion about the circulars, many of which were of great importance. Formerly they were simply a sort of explanation of the Code; now they were oftentimes very controversial and of enormous importance, and sometimes almost a Code in themselves, as for instance Circular 374. The Lord Advocate said that he sent copies of those circulars far and wide to almost every person in Scotland interested in education; but he had entirely forgotten the Scottish Members. The reason given for that by the Lord Advocate was that he was afraid they might be thrown into the waste-paper basket. He did not think, however, there was any danger of the circulars being mistaken for one of the many appeals which hon. Gentlemen received recommending a certain vintage or offering financial assistance. He did not suggest that the Department should send a circular to every Scottish Member; but he suggested that the circulars should be put down on the pink Paper, in order that any hon. Member interested might get them with his Parliamentary papers. He wished to refer to one or two questions connected with the Department. The Department issued a certificate for dynamics, but it was provided that the student should, at the same time, pass an examination in mathematics. It was perfectly right that the student should have a knowledge of mathematics; but the Department said that, even if the student previously passed in mathematics and had a certificate, he should pass in that subject again when being examined in dynamics. The explanation given was that the rule had been adopted in order to check cramming for a special subject, and that experience had confirmed the expediency of the rule. He admitted that dynamics was a subject that could be crammed; but unless a student had learned mathematics first, he could not get up dynamics. If the Department said that the student should pass in mathematics before being examined for dynamics, that would be reasonable; but it was not reasonable to ask a student to present himself in both subjects at the same time.

With reference to Circular 374, the Department now issued leaving certificates for groups of subjects. One of the groups was English, mathematics, French, and German. That was precisely the education which a man wanting an efficient clerk of about seventeen years of age would desire; but the Department refused to grant a certificate for any group which included two modern languages unless Latin were also included. The explanation given was that the leaving certificate was to show ripeness for a University career. He did not want to interfere with that; but the vast number of young men who obtained leaving certificates had no intention whatever of going to a University; and yet, because a few might want to go to a University, all the others were refused certificates for French and German unless they knew Latin also. Another answer was that there was an intermediate certificate and a commercial certificate, but those were inferior certificates and were given to boys of fifteen or sixteen, and it was adding insult to injury to tell a lad of seventeen that he should have to take an inferior certificate. Another circular was issued, Circular 375, which he welcomed as a sign of repentance on the part of the Department. That circular stated that the desired certificate would be given to certain pupils in certain schools if they enjoyed the good graces of the inspectors. Why should the Department consider individual cases, and say that individuals in certain schools would be allowed to pass certain examinations while others would not. The real reason for this regulation was that the Department believed that Latin should be learned first, in order that modern languages might be properly learned. That reminded him of the old doctors who argued that it did not matter whether they killed or cured a patient, as long as they treated him according to the pharmacopœia. As a matter of fact, in many places in Scotland, French was taught first and then Latin. In Germany the principle was to teach the modern languages first and the ancient languages afterwards. The idea of the leaving certificate was borrowed from Germany; but in Germany it was given to three classes of schools, including schools in which Latin was not taught at all. There might be something to be said for making Latin compulsory in the Universities, but it was monstrous that boys of seventeen who had finished their education should not be given a certificate for French and German simply because they had not taken Latin also. There were hourly protests against the ignorance of the British in modern languages, and the Scottish Education Department were greatly responsible for that ignorance, owing to steps they had taken in issuing this objectionable circular. He hoped the Lord Advocate would be able to assure them that it should be withdrawn.

*MR. HUNTER CRAIG (Lanarkshire, Govan) said he thoroughly dissented from the proposition of the hon. Member for Kirkcudbrightshire, that the School Boards should be abolished and their duties should be relegated to the Parish Councils, for the reason that the boundaries of the parish and county were accidental boundaries, whilst the educational system of Scotland was arranged in populous areas. In some cases such a course would necessitate there being two schools where one was all that was necessary owing to the present School Board areas being in two parishes. He thought the Committee were greatly indebted to the right hon. Member for the Cambridge University for his able contribution to the debate, and hoped that what the right hon. Member had said would be widely circulated throughout the country, and that thereby attention would be called to the underfed and unhealthy condition of the children who attended the schools, which was cause for serious alarm and consideration. It was lamentable to think their physical condition was so wretched. The right hon. Gentleman had given them a summary of statistics from the Report of the Committee on Physical Training, and proceeded therefrom to suggest a remedy; but he had expected from him and others *first* to deal with *the cause*, but this not having been touched, he ventured to say that the major cause of so many unfed children was the drunken habits of their parents. He hoped the information elicited in this debate would be of value to the Committee now sitting upstairs on the Scottish Licensing Bill, in strengthening the Bill, seeing that the welfare of the children depended on greater restrictions in the sale of intoxicating liquor. £180,000,000 annually was spent on intoxicating liquor, and it was mainly spent by the working classes—estimated at £120,000,000. So long as the money was diverted from the purchase of food for the purposes of drink, so long would they have degenerate children in the schools. Until that evil was remedied he hoped something would be done to take care of the children by making some provision for them in the way of feeding them, when they came long distances. It was most cruel to think that these poor children should only get two substantial meals a day, one in the morning and one when they got home at night.

*MR. JOHN DEWAR (Inverness) rose to draw special attention to the schools in the Highland counties, and to suggest to the Lord Advocate that the special circumstances required exceptional treatment. The Minute to which so much criticism had been directed that afternoon did not treat these schools very fairly, inasmuch as it only proposed to give the grant to schools where there were two certificated teachers. That was no doubt to induce the schools to appoint more certificated teachers, but in many cases in the Highland schools two certificated teachers were not necessary One certificated teacher with, in some cases, one or two pupil teachers performed all the duties required. The proposed grant of £40 per school did not cover the whole expense of a new certificated teacher, and he might point out that, inasmuch as the rates in the Highland districts ran from 8s. to 13s. in the £, their resources for this purpose were practically exhausted. Another thing which affected the Highlands especially was the fact that the parents lived in many cases a long way from the school. He knew of a case where a deerstalker lived eighteen miles from the nearest school, and he was prosecuted for not sending his children to school, but he had a very small salary and he could not afford to board his children near the school, and although the authorities had every desire to assist him they had no power.

And, it being half-past Seven of the Clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee Report Progress; to sit again this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

BAKER STREET AND WATERLOO RAILWAY (TRANSFER) BILL (BY ORDER).

[THIRD READING.]

Order for Third Reading read—

Motion made, and Question proposed—"That the Bill be now read the third time."

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) opposed the Motion. He explained that the Bill proposed to give authority to acquire certain lands in Lambeth for the purposes of the railway. Of late in connection with the construction of these railways, a great grievance had arisen by reason of the occupants of the houses underneath which the companies were boring, being unable to sleep through the noise and clatter incidental to night-work of that kind. His own experience was that if one had the means to make oneself obnoxious to the construction of the railway one could get some relief from this intolerable nuisance. That was shown by the case of the lady who succeeded in getting £700 from one company in order to go away and recuperate her health, which had been injured through her not being able to sleep while they were boring under her house. He complained that the works were carried on by the company by night in such a manner as to cause annoyance to poor people who could not go away, as well as to others in the neighbourhood, and as a protest against this he moved the recommittal of the Bill.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) formally seconded the Motion.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'be,' to the end of the Question, and add the words 'recommitted to the former Committee.'"—(*Mr. Claude Hay.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.,) said the Bill came before him in the Committee as an unopposed Bill, and he thought the hon. Gentleman was under a little misapprehension. The Bill was not one to carry on works at all, but merely to transfer certain houses which belonged to the South-Western Company to the Baker Street and Waterloo Company. A great number of clauses had been taken out of it to remove the objections that were made to the Bill, and under those circumstances he hoped the hon. Gentleman would reconsider the position and not persist in his Motion.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 69; Noes, 18. (Division List No. 122.)

AYES.

Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther, H. T.
Austin, Sir John
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Bigwood, James
Black, Alexander William
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bousfield, William Robert
Brigg, John
Bryce, Right Hon. James
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Caldwell, James
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Collings, Right Hon. Jesse
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*
Cremer, William Randal
Crombie, John William
Cross, Alexander (*Glasgow*)
Crossley, Sir Savile
Denny, Colonel
Dewar, John A. (*Inverness-sh.*)
Dickson, Charles Scott
Doughty, George
Evans, Saml. T. (*Glamorgan*)
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
Fenwick, Charles
Forster, Henry William
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Groves, James Grimble
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Harmsworth, R. Leicester
Haslam, Sir Alfred S.
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Sir Alexander
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Jeffreys, Rt. Hn. Arthur Fred
Jones, David Brynmor (*Swansea*
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leng, Sir John
Lewis, John Herbert
Loyd, Archie Kirkman
More, Robt. Jasper (*Shropshire*
Morgan, J. Lloyd (*Carmarthen*
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Percy, Earl
Philipps, John Wynford
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rutherford, John (*Lancashire*)
Sadler, Col. Samuel Alexander
Shaw, Thomas (*Hawick, B.*)
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Thomas, David A. (*Merthyr*)
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw. M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Ure, Alexander
Valentia, Viscount
Wason, E. (*Clackmannan*)
Wilson, John (*Glasgow*)
Wylie, Alexander

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Frederick Banbury and Mr. Purvis.

NOES.

Channing, Francis Allston
Delany, William
Doogan, P. C.
Foster, Sir Michl. (*Lond. Univ*
Griffith, Ellis J.
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (*Bristl, E*
Lundon, W.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
Moss, Samuel
Nannetti, Joseph P.
O'Brien, K. (*Tipperary Mid*)
Shackleton, David James
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Thomas, F. Freeman (*Hastings*)
Tomkinson, James
Wason, John Cathcart (*Orkney*
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Claude Hay and Mr. Dillon.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

SUPPLY [13TH ALLOTTED DAY.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

CLASS IV.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £808,828, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for Public Education in Scotland, and for Science and Art in Scotland, including a Grant-in-Aid."

*MR. JOHN DEWAR (Inverness) said the action of the Department was very unfair to the Highland schools. He thought instead of a grant to provide more certificated teachers, there should be a special grant to increase the perfectly inadequate salaries of the teachers in isolated and small schools, so as to attract teachers of greater qualifications. It must be remembered, too, that the position of the children in the Highland districts required special consideration, as the homes of many of them were from three to five miles from school. The children came in all weathers, often arrived tired and wet, with the provision for their midday meal already consumed, so that they spent the day cold and wet and hungry and miserable, and in a condition perfectly incapable of taking advantage of the education offered them. He also appealed for some opportunities of technical education in the Outer Hebrides, and suggested that the sum for this purpose should be drawn from the Grant under discussion rather than from the funds of the Congested Districts Board. The children of the Highlands were well worth educating. Whatever might be said of the children in other parts of the country, there was no physical deterioration here. It had been proved over and over again that when Highland children got the chance, they were able not only to take a good place, but a high place, in life.

MR. BRIGG (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley) said he was acquainted with districts in which provision had been made for bringing children from outside places to the towns where the technical schools were situated, and no objection had been raised thereto by either the Board of Education or the auditors. He suggested that possibly the Lord Advocate might be able, either by Minute or otherwise, to do something of the same character in connection with the scattered districts in Scotland. It was very desirable that there should be means of conveyance for both children and teachers, otherwise those who lived in the country districts were placed at a great disadvantage in the matter of education. As to the question of food, in some schools provision was made on the premises for the supply of food at very low rates, and he commended that plan to the consideration of the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. HARMSWORTH (Caithness-shire) joined in the appeal on behalf of the schools which were excluded from the benefits of the latest Minute of the Department. At the General Assembly of the United Free Churches it was unanimously resolved to memorialise the right hon. Gentleman on the subject, and he believed that had been done. The poor districts were really being penalised for their poverty. Not only were they unable to obtain such teachers as they ought to have, but they were precluded from participation in the Equivalent Grant because of their poverty. The education rate in his own constituency was anything up to 2s. 3d. in the pound, while in the neighbouring county it was anything up to 2s. 9d., and it was absurd to expect the people in these poor districts to pay anything further for the provision of educational facilities. He believed it was the fact that many of the teachers in the poorer places had never been out of the districts in which they taught, and were little better informed than the pupils they were supposed to instruct. If the right hon. Gentleman would take the case of these schools into his consideration he would find that a special grant might well be made. It was only right that the people should have a certificated teacher to instruct their children. With regard to the children who had to travel long distances to school, he realised that it was a very difficult matter to deal with, but he hoped the Lord Advocate would be able to devise some method by which the difficulty might be met.

MR. BUCHANAN (Perthshire, E.) said the case to which reference had been made was one which particularly demanded the consideration of the Government, especially on the present occasion, when they had this extra money at their disposal for the encouragement of education in the backward districts. He had had communications from friends in the northern Highlands putting the case even more strongly than it had been put by his hon. friend. The schools would not come at all within the terms of the Minute. They could not and ought not to be expected to go to the expense of an additional teacher, but they were exactly the schools which needed extra help. The Highlands had suffered more than any other part of Scotland from the fact that, owing to their isolation, the teachers had not been so well educated, well trained, or well paid as they should be, with the result that the standard of training and of education had been much lower than in other parts of the country. The Government could not put a substantial portion of this money to better use than by using it for the improvement of the class of teachers in remote country schools. This object might be secured either by improving the training or by supplementing the salaries. In three or four of the north-eastern counties for the last fifty or sixty years there had been in operation two trusts for the purpose of supplementing the salaries of the parish school teachers in the district, with the result that the teachers almost invariably possessed a University degree, and the schools had been brought to a high standard of educational efficiency. Why should not advantage be taken of the present windfall to do something in that direction? Like some of his hon. friends, he was rather disappointed at the manner in which this money had been allocated, the greater proportion having gone in the relief of the school rates. It was true the Lord Advocate had said that the arrangements were of a temporary character, and that everything would have to be put into the melting pot next year, but once aid was given to the rates it was extremely difficult to withdraw it.

With regard to the Minute, there appeared to be no direct provision in Clause 1 that the money when earned by any of the schools under (*a*), (*b*), or (*c*) should really be devoted to the improvement of the teaching staff. Doubtless that was the intention of the Department, but there was nothing in the terms of the Minute to prevent the School Board or the managers of voluntary schools putting the extra money into the common fund. He suggested that the intention of the Department should be clearly stated, so that the money would be used for increasing the number of teachers, improving their conditions and capacity, and, he hoped, supplementing their salaries. He thought the teachers as a body had a substantial grievance, and that, if from year to year they were to have additional duties imposed upon and better work expected from them, they ought to have held out to them the prospect of better salaries than they now enjoyed, with an improved social and educational status. He could not view with equanimity the prospect of an Education Bill for Scotland next year. The Lord Advocate would probably be the first to disclaim the idea that English educational ideas should affect Scotch educational reforms, but the same fountain could not bring forth waters both sweet and bitter, and it was impossible to ignore the fact that the educational measures of the present Government had been extremely obnoxious to English public opinion, and pre-eminently distasteful to Scotch opinion. However, nobody could tell what would happen between this year and next, but he certainly thought the prospects of Scotch education were not favourable so long as the Government retained the ideas embodied in the Education Act of last year and the London Education Bill of this. He had heard with interest and approval the statement of the Lord Advocate that advantage was being taken of the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art being placed under the Education Department to make that institution more of an educational office in Scotland than had hitherto been the case. That was a step in the right direction, as Scotland had a right to have within its own borders, and amenable to the public opinion of the country, the administration of so important a national interest as education.

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) emphasised what had been said with regard to the Highland schools, whose classes in many instances have been better taught than those farther south. The Government ought really to do something for the Highlands, not out of charity, but in order to give them facilities for securing that higher deucation which used there to exist. In the case of Stornoway the Inspector had stated that there ought to be a technical institution there. That was exactly one of those cases which might have been dealt with by using the money provided under this Vote. The Lord Advocate had expressed his satisfaction in regard to school attendance in Scotland, but in this respect he supposed the right hon. Gentleman had been taking his brief from the Scotch Education Department. He would give an illustration of how it was that the Department often gave an apparently flourishing condition of things when those who tested the statistics could show that there was no such progress, and as a matter of fact things were in an unsatisfactory condition. Take the number of children on the register. This would show how absurd it was for the Lord Advocate to say that the attendance was satisfactory. He had pointed out that on the school register there had been an increase over the previous year of 1,177 children, but the right hon. Gentleman omitted the important fact that meanwhile the population had increased by 1.1 per cent., whereas the increase on the register was only ·15. This showed that, allowing for the increase of population alone last year, the number should have been 7,906 more. Although they had only got an increase of 1,177 the right hon. Gentleman was rejoicing notwithstanding the fact that the figures showed them to be 7,906 short of the proper total, taking into account the increase in the population. That was an example of the way statistics were presented to the House.

The Lord Advocate said there was a decrease in the case of children under seven years of age of 2,810. There again there ought to have been an increase of 1,743, and, allowing for the increase in the population, the total deficiency was 4,553. The deficiency between the ages of six and seven amounted to 1,270, and between the ages of five and six 574. If they took the case of the older scholars, and took into account the increase of population, they would find there an enormous reduction of what ought to be. If they went further into the statistics they would find that there was a decrease in children between eleven and twelve, and there was an increase of 630 between the ages of twelve and thirteen. There was also an increase of 4,070 between the ages of thirteen and fourteen. That was the result of the working of the Education Act of 1901. Those statistics made no allowance for the increase of population Even taking into account the operation of the Act of 1901, they actually did not get up to within 2,000 of the total which ought to have been reached according to the natural increase of the population. The average attendance did not show any benefit to those on the register at all. The average attendance last year was 14·30, in 1898 it was 14·47, and in 1899–1900 it was 14·48. He did not complain, but why did the Department not state the fact clearly that they had come to a point in Scotch education in which they were at the straining point?

They had invoked the aid of an Act compelling children to attend school up to fourteen years of age, and notwithstanding this the attendance of children in Scotland had actually gone down. If legislation was a strain upon the people then they lost the co-operation of the parents, and consequently they actually lost in other ways. What good from a national point of view would it do to keep children at school between the ages of thirteen and fourteen years? At the present time they were kept there to prevent them going to work, but they were not being actually educated, and instead of doing any good they did harm by keeping the children at school against their will. A great many people seemed to think that by keeping children at school they were doing good to them, but in the case of children of thirteen or fourteen years of age who had passed the fifth or sixth standard, the worst thing they could do with those children was to compel them to go to school up to fourteen years of age, because such boys instead of dragging out an existence at school might have been sent out to work with great advantage. Such boys at once came under discipline and better surroundings, and the money they earned would enable their parents to feed them better, and better results would be obtained all round. He knew of many people who did not get much education in their early days, but had made up for it in later years, and had become most successful men. It was absurd to keep children at school if it meant absolute poverty to them and their parents. He was anxious to know how the Act was working. The Act had shown that there were 4,000 more children between thirteen and fourteen years of age at school, but what had been the effect on the school register? It had shown an absolute decline, and they now found the inspectors calling out for more vigorous legislation, and the application of compulsory powers. If they insisted on compulsory powers they would do no good educationally. He believed they had now come to a point at which they had to consider what was to be done to regain the harmony which the parents' influence produced, for without that harmony it was impossible to enforce school attendance. To get up the attendance in Glasgow they had instituted a new industrial school and a truant school, and they were making efforts to enforce the compulsory clauses of the Act. That was a bad state of matters, because what ought to produce a great improvement in education was not compulsion, but that they should make the school attractive and produce a state of things whereby the children preferred to go to school of their own accord. It was a very bad principle to talk about establishing industrial and truant schools with the view of bringing a good many boys together, because one bad boy in an industrial or truant school could do an immense amount of harm to other boys who were probably more susceptible than ordinary children. The inspectors had drawn attention to this matter of the necessity for compulsion, and there were many questions throughout the Report showing that after all it was the interest of the teachers in the children that could produce better attendance. Parents did not resent the interfe ence of teachers in regard to irregular attendance, but they generally looked with kindness upon the action of the teacher, because it showed that they were interested in the success of the children, and consequently parents co-operated wherever it was shown that the teachers took a real interest in the welfare of the children.

The next thing required was that their schools should be made so that the children would feel a pleasure in coming to them and not be over-pressed when they went to school. The present system of increasing the average attendance was by high-pressure. The Lord Advocate seemed to think it was an advantage to have a high average attendance, but this was not so in many ways. The inspectors were of the opinion that it would be better for the children to have a reasonable amount of attendance at school and have more holidays and more open-air. One inspector pointed out that about four hours a day was practically as much education as children could properly digest, and if they gave them more than that they did the children more harm than good. Up to the present, without the new supplementary course for children between twelve and fourteen years of age, the teachers considered that there was over-pressure in the school. The present curriculum had been added to quite recently, and physical training, drawing, and a number of other subjects were now to be added. In order to meet these new demands the teachers had gone to classes and obtained certificates to qualify them to teach subjects which were not under the original Code. Even in these circumstances the conditions of the Code were far more than the teachers felt they were able to teach successfully. In addition to all this over-pressure there was now to be another class formed of children between twelve and fourteen years of age, and they were to be educated in a special manner by supplementary courses. It was impossible that they could have anything like reasonable results with the same staff of teachers. As a result the schools were over-pressed and the children under over-pressure were not attended to in the way they ought to be. That was the explanation of the extraordinary circumstance that last year the numbers on the roll had been enormously reduced. When too much pressure was put on, the school was made distasteful to the children and parents did not show that co-operation in regard to school attendance which was to be desired. He maintained that a good deal of this was due to the change which had taken place in regard to the system of examination.

Under the old system established in 1872 education was put on the footing of beginning with the lowest class in society and making education compulsory on everyone. It was a system by which the authorities could make sure that the very poorest child was educated. The children were examined every year in each standard, and it was only when a child was able to pass the standard that payment was made. That system was fair to the State, the child, and the parent. By the change individual examination had been abolished, and schools were not graded on the system of standards at all. Each teacher had his own system of development, and each school had its own system of organisation. That change had been made with the view to a certain end, namely, that the clever children might go up to a certain standard. But the effect of that was that what might be called the less clever and backward children were allowed to fall down, and nobody seemed to know the state they were in. Every inspector pointed out now how difficult it was to get at the attainments of the children on account of the change in the method of examination What was the present system? They were putting all their energies into having a great many requirements. They were beginning at the top without having any solid foundation, and that was why education in Scotland would suffer.

He was glad to see from the inspectors' reports that a considerable amount of good work had been done by introducing improvements in the new school buildings recently erected. He thought this showed that the School Boards were rising to the occasion by providing what was required to meet the educational necessities of their localities. He noticed that in the case of the county of Ayr an Episcopal school was reported to be the worst in the whole district. That led him to point out that it was a pity that in giving the grant to voluntary schools it was handed over without any restriction whatever. Another point worth considering was that the playgrounds in some places were unsuitable and not kept in proper order, while some were not provided with shelter sheds. These were defects which should not be allowed to exist, and something should be done by the Department to have them remedied. There were several points in the Minute which deserved the attention of the Committee. The Lord Advocate knew that it was now admitted that they should deal with the amount given to Scotland on the principle of the Equivalent Grant. Whether it was dealt with by the equivalent being given on the basis of population, or the basis of eighty to a hundred as under the old system, was a matter of no moment, because the amount was the same whichever view was taken. The amount given to England was £2,200,000 a year.

Attention called to the fact that there were not forty Members present.

House counted, and there being forty present—

MR. CALDWELL said the grant to England of £2,200,000 wiped out the necessitous School Boards grant, and also the voluntary schools grant. Assuming that the proportion of 11-80ths was the correct proportion due to Scotland, the correct sum that ought to have been paid to her was £302,500, whereas only £278,600, or £23,900 less than the proper amount, had been paid. There could be no doubt that that would be the fair amount for Scotland. But what did the Lord Advocate do? He split the English money into two, and in 1897 he did not give Scotland the full sum she was entitled to under the Equivalent Grant. The hon. and learned Gentleman now said, referring to what was done in 1897, "We will adhere to the old arrangement." Nothing could be more ridiculous than a position of that kind. With regard to the position of the matter in 1897, the Lord Advocate knew that at that time there was a sum of £26,000 which he said Scotland would get—that was to say, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would make up this sum to Scotland in order to keep the school fee grant up to 12s. The Lord Advocate now said that the probate duty grant had increased more than had been anticipated, and that that was why Scotland did not need any part whatever of the £26,000. He desired to point out to the Lord Advocate that this position of matters was brought about not because the probate duty grant had increased, but because of an absolute mistake on the part of the Department through not taking into account the residue of the probate duty payable under the Local Government Act of 1899. The Government themselves admitted that Scotland had lost no less than £150,000 during the last six years through the blundering of the Scotch Education Department. He was sure that if the matter were properly explained to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and if the Scotch Education Department were honestly to own up that they had made a mistake, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would pay the money up at once.

Then Scotland ought to have an equivalent grant to that given to England to the voluntary schools when the School Boards were wiped away. As to the teachers, it was said last year that accommodation could be given in the training colleges for 534 students, and now there was accommodation for 691; but last year no fewer than 822 pupil teachers and 135 non-pupil teachers, or a total of 957, passed their examination, so that there was a deficiency of accommodation in the training colleges for 266 students. Every inspector told of the great difference there was between the teachers who had been trained in a college and those who had not been, because there was no room for them in any of the colleges. Last year there were 320 acting teachers in Scotland who had not passed through a training college at all. He could not conceive a greater folly than this system of non-provision of facilities for the educational training of teachers. Then as to the matter of leaving certificates. The new Minute said that where two languages were taken one of them must be Latin, and he rather approved of that because it would form a connecting link between the school and the University, where Latin was absolutely necessary for a degree in Arts.

COLONEL DENNY (Kilmarnock Burghs) said that the hon. Member had complained that the students in the training colleges did not get sufficient fresh air, but that was not the fault of the Education Department; for he was sure if the managers of the training colleges, or of any school, approached the Education Department they would sanction any expenditure for the provision of more fresh air and outdoor work for the children. No one could have read the Report of the Royal Commission on Physical Culture without feeling that there was much necessity for a change. It was absolutely certain that if the present state of things were allowed to continue, in a few years so great would be the deterioration of the children that the problem would become so serious as to menace our existence as a nation of men. There should be some sort of medical supervision, and money should not stand in the way. In one school it was found that no fewer than 90 per cent. of the children had something wrong with them. That was perfectly amazing considering that the children at the present day were better clothed and better fed than they were forty or fifty years ago. Fifty per cent. of the recruits were cast from the Army on account of their bad teeth, and he would urge the School Boards to appoint not only a dentist but an oculist to each school. If they did so he did not believe that the Education

Department would stand in the way, but would say that it was to their credit that they had made such appointments. In many cases the eyesight of a child was at fault when he was supposed to be slow in brain, dull, or idle. In fact, sometimes the child could not see a word on his lesson book. [AN HON. MEMBER: "What about the hearing?"] Hearing was often associated with defective eyesight, and defective hearing could be often cured by a simple operation. No Scotchman with any regard for the reputation of his race could read the Report of the Royal Commission without asking the Government to encourage a system of medical inspection in the schools. He concurred with the hon. Member for West Renfrewshire as to the inadvisability of devoting any part of the Equivalent Grant to the aid of local rates. The money would disappear without any advantage accruing to education, and he urged in the strongest manner that the £212,000 should be given to building technical schools. He was sure that if the Education Department devoted that capital sum for such a purpose nobody would complain. As to the teaching of Latin in schools, he admitted that nothing should be done to discourage the teaching of Latin to lads intended for a professional career; but he had been too long in business, and had travelled too much on the Continent of Europe not to know the importance of the acquisition of modern languages. A man who went as a traveller in the interests of British manufacturers to France, Germany, and Russia might as well stay at home if he did not know the modern languages. He knew men who had been trained in Latin in school and college, who were of no use in business life because of their want of knowledge of modern languages. The Scotch Education Department had no doubt insisted on Latin in the leaving certificate, with the best intentions in the world, but if it were insisted upon it might be attended with the most disastrous results so far as those who wished to follow a commercial career were concerned.

There was another point to which he wished to refer. He had sat for eighteen months as one of the representatives of this House on the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the condition of the Mercantile Marine, and to see what could be done to induce more British lads to go to sea and stay there. One of the complaints made from almost all the witnesses was the defective cooking on board ship; and what was wanted was that the average sailor should be able to cook something fit to eat. That could not be done without education. He remembered one captain saying that a good cook could make a pudding from a couple of lbs. of flour which would fill a cabin, while a bad cook would not make a pudding from the same quantity of flour bigger than a cricket ball.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN said he did not see any grant for sea cooking down on the Estimates.

COLONEL DENNY said that there ought to have been; and all that he asked was that the Lord Advocate should take this matter into consideration. He wished to congratulate the Scotch Education Department and the Gentleman at its head on the good work they had done. That Gentleman might rest assured that although hon. Members sometimes criticised sharply enough certain things which the Department had done, they all felt that the Department was one of which Scotsmen might well be proud, and they only desired to make it still more effecient.

MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY said he could assure the hon. and gallant Member who had just sat down that the Education Department hoped to be able to do something in the matter of increasing the facilities for cookery instruction under the Continuation Code. He supposed he might take it that the hon. and gallant Gentleman considered size and quality as being always equal. The hon. Member for Mid Lanark had spoken at some length on the old story of the exact amount of money due to Scotland on the principle of the equivalent grant. He could not accept the hon. Member's statement that the loss of £26,000 per annum for a period of years was due to the Scotch Education Department. It was right that he should say that, because what was offered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer was a promise which was estimated in value at £26,000. That Estimate might have been right or wrong, and the point to-night was that the Department had successfully persuaded the Chancellor of the Exchequer that they should have the money in cash in future. He would remind the hon. Member for Mid Lanark that they could not take this matter of the Equivalent Grant piecemeal as he was inclined to do. If they took the sum of the Imperial subventions between 1890 and 1901 to the assistance of the local authorities, it would be found that Scotland had not at all the worst of the divide. As to the disposition of the money by Minute, that course had been adopted because the money was given this year by means of a general grant from the Treasury, and, therefore, the introduction of a Bill was not necessary. A Bill was necessary in the case of England and Ireland, because Parliament was making certain legislative changes by which the money was diverted to other purposes. If the money granted to Scotland had been diverted to other purposes it also would have to be dealt with by a Bill. The present system did not do away with Parliamentary control.

Coming to the merits of the Minute, that portion of it which dealt with the relief given to the smaller schools had, generally speaking, obtained the approbation of most of the speakers. The hon. Member for Leith, while entirely in sympathy with the object, seemed to think that these grants to the smaller schools would prejudice what he considered would be a great reform in the educational system in Scotland—viz., the enlarging the School Board areas. He did not think that the enlarging of the School Board areas for the purposes of administration would very much affect the question of school supply in sparsely populated districts. The hon. Member for Inverness-shire and the hon. Member for East Aberdeen seemed to think that the Highland schools had not been treated with generosity under the Minute. He was in sympathy with the object which these gentlemen had in view, but he would point out that the grant was given to Scotland as an equivalent to that which was given to all parishes in England. It would not be right to give it in Scotland otherwise than in proportions corresponding to local effort. A great many hon. Members had complained that the relief had gone to the rates. He did not admit that the grant was to be regarded as a relief to the rates. It was the charge which had been in England an Imperial contribution to local resources for primary education, and it was as an Imperial subvention to local resources of primary education in Scotland that it must be regarded. The hon. Members for the Border Burghs and for Banffshire had made it a grievance that in this money voluntary schools had a share.

Mr. BLACK: No. I complained of the method of allocation. I said if it was only temporary the voluntary schools would lose, because their voluntary subscriptions would be wiped out.

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY said he understood the hon. Member to object to the money being given to voluntary schools. It had been said that it would not be right to give any of this money to Roman Catholic or Episcopal schools; but the money was given in England to aid the local resources that went to provide primary education. Why, then, should not the same be done in Scotland? He was asked why none of this money was given to continuation schools. The reason was that they were schools which were not necessary in every part of the country. As to the propriety of giving building grants, £6,500 had been given lately in that way, and it was probable that more grants of the kind would be made. Of course the distribution under the Minute was merely a temporary distribution. He did not at all mean that he did not think the distribution a proper distribution, even if it had been permanent; but if there was to be a new Bill it was quite obvious that the whole of the educational resources must be within the purview of that Bill, and accordingly the arrangement could only be temporary at present. He noticed that the hon. Member for the Border

Burghs made a speech at the end of a convivial gathering recently in the course of which he said that he would sooner abandon his political life than see the subject of Scotch education handled by the present Government. Of course they would be grieved to see the hon. Member leave political life, and he did hope that if he were allowed to bring in the Bill next year, it would not be at such a cost. A great deal had been said about the circulars. In particular the hon. Member for Leith had complained that too much was left in the power of the Department, and that everything was done by circular and Minute. He thought the hon. Member forgot what a circular was. It was the Code only that was operative, and the authority of the Code itself was only perfect after it had been on the Table of the House, when the constitutional method of objecting or vindicating the control by Parliament was to present an address asking that sanction might not be given to the Code. He really did not see what other Parliamentary control there could be over this Department, any more than there was over any other Department. There were only two ways in which Parliament could exercise control over a Department—first, by dealing with any Bill which emanated from the Department, and secondly, by criticising the Estimates and moving reductions.

A good deal had been said about London and Edinburgh. Some speakers had talked of a consultative body; but could anything be imagined more fatal to the progress of education in Scotland than that there should be continual collisions between a consultative body, which would have to be elected in some way, and the Education Department? If they did not have collisions it would be only because the Education Department gave in to the consultative body, and then once again there would be the old story that they were ruled by a body not responsible to Parliament. As to the circular about modern languages, he very much regretted the extraordinarily strong language which had been used by the right hon. Baronet behind him, as well as by the hon Member for Kincardineshire and North-west Lanarkshire. A complete misconception seemed to prevail. The mistake could hardly be made, unless only the one circular had been read, without the circulars which accompanied it. The one thing the Department had done more than another lately had been to encourage and not to discourage, as seemed to be suggested, the cultivation of modern languages. As to the provision that of two languages one should be Latin, that was because the leaving certificate was meant for two classes of people—those who were going to a University and those who were going into the teaching profession. But for other branches there was the commercial certificate, which did not necessitate the taking of Latin at all, but allowed two modern languages to be taken, and the commercial certificate was in no way inferior to the leaving certificate—the only difference was that it represented a shorter course. There was suitable provision for special commercial studies. After the intermediate stage, commercial subjects were given a special direction, and the instruction in foreign languages was concerned chiefly with the vocabulary and subject matter of commercial proceedings. Would the hon. Gentleman prefer a clerk brought up and trained in everyday conversation and commercial proceedings, or trained in the more strictly linguistic teaching for which the leaving certificate was given? As a practical man he would choose the former; and that is precisely the clerk he would get under the commercial certificate. This circular had been most extraordinarily misunderstood, and when the proposals of the Department were viewed, not from one circular alone, but from all the circulars, it would be at once seen that, so far from discouraging the study of modern languages, the Department had fostered the study of modern languages in a manner which was specially desirable in commercial life. With reference to Circular 374, the hon. Member for North-west Lanark quoted a portion of a speech of a well known and most respected lady, Miss Flora Stevenson. He could not allow the hon. Member to hide himself behind the skirts of Miss Flora Stevenson. The hon. Member should have the courage of his convictions, and say whether he disapproved of those supplementary courses or not. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Aberdeen spoke of specialisation; but his reply was that no one who read

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

MARINE STORE DEALERS (IRELAND) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2 :—

MR. MACVEAGH (Down, S.) moved to insert after the word "articles" "provided that where articles of the same kind, value, or description are on a particular occasion bought or sold in a lot or parcel, it will be sufficient to describe such lot or parcel without describing the several articles contained therein separately."

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 14, after the word 'article' to insert the words, 'Provided that where articles of the same kind, value, and description are on any particular occasion bought or sold in a lot or parcel it will be sufficient to describe such lot or parcel without describing each of the several articles comprising same.'"—(*Mr. MacVeagh.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.) said he thought it would not be wise to accept the Amendment.

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) said he strongly objected to Bills being passed after midnight on Supply nights. He would therefore move to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."

MR. ATKINSON said that the Bill was an agreed measure, and that the effect of postponing it would be to kill it.

MR. CALDWELL said that if there was no objection to the Bill, it would pass on Monday.

MR. ATKINSON said that there was a general desire that the Bill should pass.

MR. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green) said the Bill had met with the approval of all the representatives from Ireland, and he appealed to the hon. Member to permit it to pass.

MR. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.) said he wished to join in the appeal to the hon. Member to allow the Bill to go through.

MR. CALDWELL said he was confident the Bill could be passed on Monday. It would be dangerous to accept the principle that Bills might be passed on Supply nights, as hon. Members went away at midnight in the belief that Bills would not be taken.

Question put, and agreed to.

Committee report progress, to sit again upon Monday next.

Adjourned at eight minutes after Twelve o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 19*th June*, 1903.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with: Alexandra Park and Palace.

The same was ordered to lie on the Table.

Great Northern Railway Bill; The Lord Chancellor informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn: The orders made on the 14th of May and Monday last discharged, and Bill committed.

Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]; Reported from the Select Committee with Amendments, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

Mid Yorkshire Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Manchester Southern Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill (No. 120); Broughty Ferry Gas Provisional Order Bill (No. 121); Hamilton Burgh Provisional Order Bill (No. 122); Military Lands Provisional Orders Bill (No. 123); Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners.

Baker Street and Waterloo Railway (Transfer) Bill; Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners.

St. Luke's Church and Parish Quoad Sacra Edinburgh Order Confirmation Bill. [H.L.]; Returned from the Commons agreed to.

Winchester Water and Gas Bill; Midland Railway Bill; Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill; Order of yesterday for the Commitment of the Bill to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next discharged, and Bill committed: The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill; Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed.

Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.]; Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Naval Work Provisional Order Bill: Committee of the Whole House (which stands appointed for this day), put off to Monday next.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

AFRICA No. 6. (1903.)

Report by His Majesty's Commissioner on the East Africa Protectorate.

WELLINGTON COLLEGE.

Report of the Governors, for the year ended the 31st December, 1902; with accounts.

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.

Orders made by the Light Railway Commissioners and modified and confirmed by the Board of Trade.

Authorising the construction of light railways between Stockton Heath and Northwich, and elsewhere in the County of Chester.

Authorising the construction of light railways in the County Borough of Warrington and in the parishes of Stockton Heath and Latchford Without, in the County of Chester.

Authorising the construction of light railways in the County of Kent, in the County Borough of Canterbury, and in the rural districts of Bridge and of Blean, and in the urban district of Herne Bay.

Authorising the County Council of Middlesex to take lands for widening roads on which light railways will be laid in the parishes of Edgware, Finchley, Friern Barnet, Hendon, Kingsbury, Little Stanmore, Southgate, Tottenham, Willesden, and Wood Green in the County of Middlesex.

Authorising the compulsory purchase of lands for the purposes of the Cole and Trawden Light Railways Order, 1901, and for other purposes.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

BISHOPRICS OF SOUTHWARK AND BIRMINGHAM BILL [H.L.].

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

LORD BELPER: My Lords, I understand that a wish has been expressed by some noble Lords that more time should be given for the consideration of this Bill. If that is the general wish of the House I will postpone the Second Reading until Monday.

EARL SPENCER: I certainly did hear that there were certain persons very much interested in this Bill who did not have the print of it in their hands until last night. I understand that copies of the Bill were circulated to your Lordships early on Wednesday morning, and if that is so I think a little longer time should be allowed before the Second Reading stage is taken. It is true that it is on the lines of a Bill introduced last session, but it goes a great deal farther, as it deals also with Birmingham. I am glad, therefore, that the noble Lord has expressed his willingness to postpone it.

Second Reading postponed accordingly until Monday next.

PREFERENTIAL TARIFFS—GERMANY AND CANADA.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN, who had given notice "To call attention to the statement of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, made on 15th June, that 'it has been intimated by the German Government that if other British colonies follow the example of Canada and give a preference to British imports, Great Britain probably will not be allowed to continue in receipt of the most-favoured-nation terms;' and to move that Papers may be laid upon the Table of the House as soon as the public interest will permit" said: My Lords, the Foreign Secretary the other night, in the course of the debate upon preferential tariffs, let drop certain very important words to which it was not possible to draw sufficient attention at that time. The subject which was before the House was not our relations with Germany, but the question of preferential tariffs. The noble Marquess, who never speaks without care and deliberation, made a very important statement, as I thought, and he concluded by saying that what had happened had created a very serious situation. I think, therefore, that it is desirable that the attention of your Lordships should be called, and that of the country directed, to the correspondence which appears to have been recently passing between our Foreign Office and the German Government. The noble Marquess, speaking at the time of the difficulties which had arisen between Canada and the German Government with regard to the preferential terms which Canada had conceded to this country, told us tha it was quite possible, and, indeed, likely, that the German Government might proceed to put further surtaxes on Canadian produce; and then he used these words, that it had been intimated by the German Government that if other British colonies followed the example of Canada and gave a preference to British imports, Great Britain probably would not be allowed to continue in receipt of the most-favoured-nation terms.

Now, my Lords, what is this notice that has been presented to us by the German Government? The German Government say that if any other British colony chooses to concede to this country preferential terms punishment is to follow. Who is to be punished? Is it the colony? That, I presume, goes without saying. But, in addition to the colony, Great Britain, although she may not have asked for this preference, although she may not even be desirous to have it, yet because one of her colonies has chosen to place her upon preferential terms, is to be removed from the most-favoured-nation clauses as far as Germany is concerned. That is a notice which is quite unprecedented so far as I know; I am not aware that any independent nation has ever sent such a notice to another. But, my Lords, what is Germany's position? Germany argues, in the first place, in this wise. She says—"We claim to differentiate against Canada because we contend that Canada, having a fiscal system of her own, and being a representative colony, is not, for fiscal purposes, part of the British Empire, and we have the right to treat her as an independent Power." But she alters her ground after that. Then she says—"But we inform you, Great Britain, that if any other of your colonies concedes to you a preference, then you are responsible for that colony, although it is representative, although it has a separate fiscal system of its own. We will punish it, but we will also punish you, and we will no longer concede to you the most-favoured-nation terms."

My Lords, were such inconsistent arguments ever before brought forward? Can any one say that there is any justice in such a course? Now, what is the meaning of this notice? It must be one of two things. It may be a threat to terrorise the colonies and prevent them from drawing nearer to this country, and also a threat to this country that if she allows her colonies to draw nearer to her she is to take the consequences. Are German statesmen so ignorant of the whole character and temper of this country that they really believe that a course like this is likely to succeed? The policy of the "mailed fist" may do very well in Germany—though even there discontent and Socialism appear to be spreading very rapidly, according to what we see and read—but in this country that policy is of all policies the least likely to succeed. Yet we are told that Great Britain is to be placed on a stool apart from all the other boys as an example to the world of what happens to a naughty boy when he dares to disregard the directions of the master. If it is not this—and I see that some of the organs of the German Press have been contending just within this last day or two that it is not intended for a threat—then what else can it be except a direct challenge to this country to a war of tariffs? I can hardly believe that that is the case, but if it be so the levity of such a course as that is only exceeded by its unwisdom.

Does Germany really wish to enter upon a commercial war with this country? Is it wise, in her own interests, that she should do so? If you look at the trade between Germany and this country—I take the three years which immediately preceded the South African war and which therefore may be regarded as the last normal years—you will find that in 1897 Germany exported to this country goods to the value of 699,000,000 marks, and imported from us goods to the value of 567,000,000 marks; in 1898 she exported to us 740,000,000 marks, and imported from us 566,000,000 marks; in 1899 she exported to us 801,000,000 marks worth of goods, and imported from us 672,000,000 marks. Therefore, if Germany chooses to enter upon a commercial war with us, she is doing away with one of her very best customers. Of course, Germany is the best judge of what is good for her own commercial interests, but I do not think that any of us would have advocated a course like that if we had been speaking of the interests of Great Britain. Germany has declared commercial war upon Canada. What is the effect likely to be there? The trade is not a very large one, but Germany's exports to Canada are five or six times what her imports from Canada are. Pray how is Germany benefited if she places a surtax on Canada which merely produces a surtax in retaliation on her own goods? But she promises to carry this policy further, and she says that if any other British colony gives a preference to Great Britain it will be treated in a like way. I presume she therefore wishes to throttle her growing trade with Australia—a trade which at the present time is a very important one; and I presume also that she wishes to throttle her trade with British South Africa if the resolutions which were passed the other day at the Bloemfontein Conference are adopted by the various British colonies there. One can only say how unwise this is, but it is for Germany to take her own course.

Let us look nearer home. It is very evident from the German Press that this policy of preferential tariffs between this country and her colonies, which is at the present time under discussion, is a matter which creates considerable concern in Germany, and, as we know, the Secretary of State for the Colonies is not very popular in Germany. He has had to express his opinion, on one occasion at all events, very clearly to a German statesman, and he is not regarded with much favour in the German Press. He is the chief advocate of preferential tariffs. Pray how is Germany advancing her own cause by taking the line she has taken? If she had wished to assist to her utmost the cause which the Colonial Secretary is advocating, what better method could she possibly have adopted than by explaining to this country so graphically the lesson of retaliation? There is nothing like an object lesson to inform the public mind in this country with regard to any public question. This country never would have understood the South African question if ex-President Kruger had not declared war; and when Germany informs this country that if she draws nearer to her colonies she shall suffer by being taken out of the most-favoured-nation clause, that is a thing which, as soon as it is realised, will be thoroughly understood, and, as I believe, deeply resented.

I say it with regret, but unfortunately this is by no means a solitary instance in which the German Government has done its best to annoy and to irritate this country in late years. When the German Empire was founded there were a very large number of people in this country—I believe the majority—who thought that the German Alliance was the natural alliance and the best alliance for this country. We all respect the energy, the steadfastness, the thoroughness of the character of the German nation, and we admire many other of their high qualities, and it would seem that an alliance and a close friendship between the two nations was most natural. But I regret to say that on many occasions—I need not give instances, for there is no use in ripping up old sores, and your Lordships know them well—German statesmen and the German Press seem to have been actuated by a desire, and they certainly have known how, to annoy this country deeply in more than one way, and a conviction has been gaining ground, during the last two or three years I am afraid rapidly, that when we look for friendship we had better look somewhere else than to Germany. What the reason of this may be I am sure I do not know. All I can say is that I deeply lament it; but you may depend upon it that irritating messages such as this, even if for the moment their effect may pass away, are not likely to be forgotten. It is very desirable, I think, that we should see the correspondence that has taken place on this matter, and that we should see it with as little delay as may be. I do not think that it is possible that this correspondence, or this part of it, can be long. To any such communication as that which the noble Marquess said he had received there could be only one answer—a very simple one. No British Government could give any answer but one. What is wanted, I think, in this matter is plain speaking, and it does not at all follow that plain speaking means a diminution of friendship. The German Government, I hope, has already been made to understand that the relations between ourselves and our colonies is an affair which concerns us alone, and that messages or threats or warnings which are conveyed to us by any foreign nation with regard to our colonies, whatever may be their object and their intention, are only likely to confirm us more in taking the course which we choose to take. I beg to move for the correspondence which has taken place with the German Government on this matter.

Moved, That an humble address be presented to His Majesty for correspondence relating to the statement of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, made on 15th June, that "it has been intimated by the German Government that if other British Colonies follow the example of Canada and give a preference to British imports, Great Britain probably will not be allowed to continue in receipt of the most-favoured-nation terms."—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE): My Lords, I will not attempt to follow the noble Earl through the whole of the interesting speech which he has just delivered. That speech was mainly devoted to enforcing an argument which I used myself the other night, and I therefore listened to it with feelings of concurrence and approval. The noble Earl, of course, was able to speak with an amount of unofficial freedom which I could not use in the course of my remarks the other evening. I have, I think, however, said enough to show the noble Earl that I fully realise the great importance of the question which he has brought before your Lordships, and I do not feel that I am called upon to-night to add to, or to take away anything from, what I ventured to say on the subject the other evening. My Lords, I will only make this observation in passing. The noble Earl indulged in some severe strictures upon the conduct of the German Government on this and on other occasions. My Lords, I desire to deprecate the assumption that in this matter the conduct of the German Government has been actuated by deliberate hostility to the Government of His Majesty. I think the German Government have taken a course which it was perhaps not unnatural that they should take, knowing, as they did, the manner in which up to the present time we have been in the habit of dealing with questions concerning the treatment of our colonies. What I think is necessary is that we should do what the noble Earl says we should, I mean that we should make our position in regard to these matters perfectly clear and intelligible to Germany and to all concerned, and I have very little doubt that when this is done we shall find it possible to bring about a settlement of these questions on terms satisfactory to ourselves and to the colonies. With respect to the Papers, the noble Earl and every Member of your Lordships' House is, of course, fully entitled, after the argument which I used the other evening, to require their production. I am having them got in in order. The noble Earl is, of course, aware that when Papers are laid including communications which have passed with a foreign Government that Government has to be consulted before the Papers are finally put in shape for presentation; but I see no reason why that process should take up any length of time, and I hope within a few days to lay the Papers before the House, and the noble Earl will find that they carry the history of this matter up to the present date.

VISCOUNT GOSCHEN: How far will the Papers go back? I understand that there are some important despatches going back as far as 1897.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My idea was to begin with the Papers of 1897, and bring the correspondence up to the last despatches which have passed. Some of the 1897 Papers have already been laid, but I think it would be desirable to include them in the new Blue-book.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: As the noble Marquess has consented to lay the Papers on the Table when they are ready, I beg to withdraw my Motion.

Motion, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

THE SERVIAN MASSACRE.

LORD NEWTON, who had the following notice on the Paper, viz.—"To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether His Majesty's Government propose to take any common or concerted action with other Powers with regard to the new Government of Servia," said: My Lords, the Question which appears in my name has already been answered in another place, but I have left it on the Paper, and propose to put it so as to afford the noble Marquess an opportunity of making a more ample statement, if he thinks fit, than was made in the House of Commons. I do not wish to detain your Lordships at any length in discussing this matter, but I cannot help remarking upon the extraordinary apathy, amounting I might almost say to callousness, with which this most atrocious crime has been received throughout Europe. I cannot but think that if this event had taken place in the neighbouring country of Turkey we should have heard from many a platform and pulpit eloquent denunciations and assertions that such an occurrence could not have been possible in any Christian country. Although the statement has been made by the Provisional Servian Government that—

> "Highly satisfactory despatches have been received from the Governments of London, Paris, Berlin, and Rome,"

I have very little doubt in my own mind that this is an impudent fabrication on the part of the Provisional Government. But the fact does remain that so far only two protests have been publicly made against this most atrocious crime—one in the message addressed by the Emperor of Austria to the newly elected king, and the other in the *communiqué* published to-day from the *Official Messenger* of St. Petersburg, in which the hope is expressed that condign punishment will be inflicted on the perpetrators of these murders. It is, however, extremely difficult to see how this can be carried out, because the new king, it is perfectly evident, can only be the creature of the conspirators who have been the means of securing his election. So far as Servia itself is concerned, the feelings of nobody appear to have been outraged at all. On the contrary, the assassins are glorified as heroes, the National Assembly has passed a vote of thanks to them, and their action has been effusively and solemnly blessed by the clergy. As a matter of fact, this is a crime that does not possess one single redeeming feature—it has no justification of patriotism. We are assured that the country sympathises with the disappearance of the Obrenovitch dynasty, and that popular feeling is in favour of the change which has occurred. Anyone who knows anything about the Balkan States knows perfectly well that popular feeling in the ordinary acceptance of the term is non-existent, and that it is solely created, formed, and regulated by the set of politicians who happen to be in power, and who control it through the police and the other means at their disposal. This has been nothing but a sordid military conspiracy carried out in an atrocious way, and inspired by sordid motives. It is evidently a purely military conspiracy of the ordinary kind, and it has been carried out by an army which is obviously a much more efficient instrument for effecting a palace revolution than for encountering a neighbouring country on the field of battle. I am the last person who wishes to see sentiment imported into foreign politics. If the Servian people really like to be governed by assassins and conspirators that is their own look-out, and we have no title to interfere, provided British interests are not affected, but I venture to express the opinion that there is something actually revolting in the continuance of ordinary relations with persons responsible for a crime of this nature; and whatever may be the intention of foreign Governments, whether they propose to exact reparation for this crime or not, I trust that His Majesty's Government will take an early opportunity of expressing in the most emphatic manner their abhorrence of this crime, not only because it is a disgrace to civilisation, but because a crime of this kind must re-act in the very worst possible manner far beyond the boundaries of the country in which it has been committed.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, I can assure the noble Lord that His Majesty's Government do not yield to him in the abhorrence which he has expressed for the events which have lately disgraced the capital of Servia. That abhorrence has not been diminished by any later intelligence which has reached us in regard to those events. I think it would be no exaggeration to say that it would be hard to find a parallel, even in the annals of States which have no pretence to be included amongst civilised communities, for outrages of such a character as those which we are discussing this evening. The noble Lord asked me "whether His Majesty's Government propose to take any common and concerted action with other Powers with regard to the new Government of Servia." I am not quite sure whether I understood him to suggest that it was our duty to concert with other Powers measures of a punitive character directed against the authors of these outrages. My Lords, no proposal of that kind has been made to us, nor, I conceive, could we usefully have made such a proposal to other Powers; but when we pass from that to the question of diplomatic relations, then I am certainly prepared to tell the noble Lord that nothing is further from our thoughts than to maintain what he spoke of as ordinary relations with persons who were implicated in these events. Our action in the matter has already been publicly explained. Our diplomatic relations came to an end with the death of the late King, and they have not been renewed. We had it at first in contemplation to mark our indignation by the immediate withdrawal of our representative, Sir George Bonham, from Belgrade, but we came to the conclusion that it was better, at all events for a time, that Sir George Bonham should remain at his post. We desired that he might be there to watch over British interests and to report to us as to the progress of events; but he was specially instructed, by a telegram which I addressed to him on the 15th inst., that his intercourse with the authorities was to be strictly limited to what is necessary for these purposes, and he was told that he was to be careful to do nothing which might be construed as an official recognition of the Provisional Government, whose freedom from complicity in the Acts of the night of June 10th has not yet been established, or as pledging His Majesty's Government to recognise the authority which may be set up in succession to the dynasty. With regard to the action of other Powers, although there has been no attempt at combined or concerted action, we have taken measures to inform ourselves as to what is intended, and I believe I am correct in saying that three, at least, of the Great Powers—France, Germany, and Italy — are maintaining an attitude corresponding to that which we have maintained. Two other Powers — Russia and Austria — are, we understand, prepared to recognise the new *régime*; but Russia, at all events, appears to have made it plain that she expected the punishment of the persons concerned in these crimes. I may, perhaps, add, that we have come to the conclusion that it would not be desirable that Sir George Bonham should be at Belgrade when the new reign is inaugurated. We have, therefore, instructed him to leave the capital for a time.

EARL SPENCER: My Lords, I only wish to say that I have heard with great satisfaction the statement of the noble Marquess. It seems to me that it would have been very unfortunate, and not at all in accordance with our position as a great civilised Power, to pass over without some marked comment the terrible tragedy which took place at Belgrade. What the noble Marquess has told us seems to put in a satisfactory way the view which His Majesty's Government very properly took of these events, and which the country will, I am sure, support. It is satisfactory to learn, at all events, that certain of the Great Powers are viewing them in the same way. I hope, therefore, that, though it may not be very strongly marked, it will show the horror which the action of the conspirators has aroused in all the civilised countries of Europe.

THE DUKE OF RUTLAND: My Lords, I wish to say that I have heard with great satisfaction the statement of the noble Marquess, especially the part of it which informed us that Sir George Bonham was not to remain at Belgrade during the investiture of the new Sovereign. That, at any rate, will be a sign of the intense disapprobation and horror felt universally throughout this country at the atrocious deeds perpetrated the other night, and I am pleased that the noble Marquess has placed that view of the case before your Lordships.

MUSICAL COPYRIGHT BILL [H.L.].

[THIRD READING.]

Moved, That the Bill be now read 3ª.—(*The Earl of Lytton.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

THE EARL OF LYTTON: My Lords, I have two Amendments to move, the first of which is rendered necessary by the omission of the original Clause 5 of the Bill, which took place in the Standing Committee. But I wish to make one small alteration in the wording of the Amendment which now reads—"If any person shall sell or offer for sale, or carry for the purpose of sale, in or through any street or *place of public resort*," etc. I propose to substitute the words "public place" for the words "place of public resort."

Amendment moved—

"After Clause 4, to insert as a new Clause, 'If any person shall sell or offer for sale, or carry for the purpose of sale, in or through any street or public place, any pirated copy of any musical work, such person may be apprehended by any constable without warrant, if the true name and address of such person are not known to, and cannot then reasonably be ascertained by, the constable, and on the request in writing of the apparent owner of the copyright in such work, or of his agent thereto authorised in writing, and at the risk of such owner, and shall be taken as soon as reasonably may be before a Court of summary jurisdiction to be dealt with according to law.' "—(*The Earl of Lytton.*)

Lord BELPER: The Home Office approve of the wording of the Amendment with the slight alteration which the noble Earl has made and which appears to be necessary, as otherwise it might be possible, in a place of public amusement, or a station, or other place of public resort, to call in the police, which is not desirable.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

The Earl of LYTTON: The second Amendment is a purely drafting one, which I am told is necessary to make the Bill work.

Amendment moved—

Clause 6, to leave out Sub-sections 3 and 4, and to insert as a new Sub-section: 'This Act and the Musical (Summary Proceedings) Copyright Act, 1902, shall extend to the Isle of Man (and all penalties recoverable and all acts authorised to be done by, or in any Court of summary jurisdiction in the island, may be recovered or done before or by a high bailiff, or two justices of the peace).' "—(*The Earl of Lytton.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Moved, That the Bill do pass.—(*The Earl of Lytton.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to, and Bill sent to the Commons.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

COAL MINES (CERTIFICATES) BILL.

Read 3ª, with the Amendment, and passed, and returned to the Commons.

House adjourned at ten minutes past Five o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 19th June, 1903.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH.

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, that, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz.:—

Willesden Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; Didcot, Newbury, and Southampton Railway Bill [Lords]; Scottish American Mortgage Company, Limited, Bill [Lords]; Fife Electric Power Bill [Lords]; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill [Lords]; Liverpool University Bill [Lords]; Barry Railway Bill [Lords]; Taff Vale Railway Bill [Lords]. Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for the following Bill the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz.:—

Alexandra Park and Palace Bill. Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have not been complied with, viz.:—

Rochester Corporation Tramways and Improvements Bill [Lords]. Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

Harrogate Water Bill [Lords]; Rickmansworth Gas Bill [Lords]. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Broughty Ferry Gas Provisional Order Bill; Hamilton Burgh Provisional Order Bill; Military Lands Provisional Orders Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Derby Gas Bill [Lords]; Manchester Southern Tramways Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 250.]

Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 251.]

St. Luke's Church and Parish Quoad Sacra, Edinburgh, Order Confirmation Bill [Lords]. Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill. As amended, considered, to be read the third time upon Monday next.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill. Consideration, as amended, deferred till Wednesday next.

Local Government Provisional Order (No. 18) Bill. As amended, considered, to be read the third time upon Monday next.

Alexandra Park and Palace. Petition for Bill; referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

PETITIONS.

BURGH POLICE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Perth, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.

Petitions against: from Tenterden; Chichester; Bristol; Leytonstone; and Southport; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petition from Southport, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCES (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL).

Three Petitions from London, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.

Petition from Callington, against; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL.

Petition from Callington, against; to be laid upon the Table.

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL, AND LICENSING LAW (COMPENSATION FOR NON-RENEWAL) BILL.

Petitions against: from Plymouth (six); and Basford; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Bathgate, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.

Petitions against: from Wateringbury; and Southport; to lie upon the Table.

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Newcastle-upon-Tyne; Burnley; Newmilns; and, East Greenwich; to lie upon the Table.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

Petition from Westminster, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Two Petitions from Falmouth, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SHOPS (EARLY CLOSING) BILL.

Petition from Southport, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and modified and confirmed by the Board of Trade, authorising the construction of Light Railways in the county of Kent, in the county borough of Canterbury, and in the rural districts of Bridge and of Blean, and in the urban district of Herne Bay (Canterbury and Herne Bay Light Railway Order, 1903) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and modified and confirmed by the Board of Trade, authorising the County Council of Middlesex to take lands for widening roads on which Light Railways will be laid in the parishes of Edgware, Finchley, Friern Barnet, Hendon, Kingsbury, Little Stanmore, Southgate, Tottenham, Willesden, and Wood Green, in the county of Middlesex (County of Middlesex Light Railways (Lands) Orders, 1903) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and modified and confirmed by the Board of Trade, authorising the construction of Light Railways between Stockton Heath and Northwich, and elsewhere in the county of Chester (Warrington and Northwich Light Railways Order, 1903) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and confirmed by the Board of Trade, authorising the compulsory purchase of lands for the purposes of Colne and Trawden Light Railways Order, 1901, and for other purposes (Colne and Trawden Light Railways (Acquisition of Lands Amendment) Order, 1903) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.

Copy Presented, of Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and modified and confirmed by the Board of Trade, authorising the construction of Light Railways in the county borough of Warrington and in the parishes of Stockton Heath and Latchford Without in the county of Chester (Warrington Corporation Light Railways Order, 1903) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

AFRICA (No. 6, 1903).

Copy presented, of Report by His Majesty's Commissioner on the East Africa Protectorate [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

WELLINGTON COLLEGE.

Copy presented, of Report of the Governors of Wellington College for the year ending 31st December 1902, with Accounts [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act for further promoting the Revision of the Statute Law by repealing Enactments which have ceased to be in force or have become unnecessary." [Statute Law Revision (Scotland) Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Gas and Water Works Facilities Act, 1870, relating to Cobham Gas, Conisbrough Gas, Hailsham Gas, St. Ives (Hunts) Gas, and Woking District Gas." [Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled "An Act to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Gas and Water Works Facilities Act, 1870, relating to Brading Harbour District Gas, Crossgates, Halton, and Seacroft Gas, Herne Bay Gas, Pembroke Docks and Town Gas, and Riddings District Gas." [Gas Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for consolidating the capital of the Derby Gas Light and Coke Company; for enabling that Company to raise additional capital; and for other purposes." [Derby Gas Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to incorporate the Manchester Southern Tramways Company, and to empower that Company to make and maintain tramways and other works in the county palatine of Lancaster and in the county of Chester; and for other purposes." [Manchester Southern Tramways (Lancashire) Bill [Lords], and Manchester Southern Tramways (Cheshire) Bill [Lords], now "Manchester Southern Tramways Bill [Lords."]

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

Third Report brought up, and read; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 212.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Inspection of "Registered Places" (Cruelty to Animals Act, 1876).

DR. SHIPMAN (Northampton): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many inspections of registered places have been made during the year 1902 by the inspectors appointed under the Act 39 and 40 Vic., c. 77 (The Cruelty to Animals Act, 1876), in England and Scotland and in Ireland.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas.*) The number of inspections of registered places in England and Scotland made in 1902 is 118. As to Ireland, where the administration of the Act does not lie with me, I have made inquiries and am informed that no exact record has been kept of the number of inspections made.

Suffragan Bishops and Parochial Appointments.

MR. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): To ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, having regard to the duties of Suffragan Bishops, His Majesty's Government will advise that in any future appointment of a clergyman to a Suffragan Bishopric it shall be made a condition that such clergyman shall not, during his tenure of the bishopric, simultaneously hold important parochial preferment.

(*Answered by Mr. A. J. Balfour.*) The hon. Member is perhaps not aware that Bishops Suffragan are nominated by the Bishop of the Diocese, and that the function of the Crown is merely to approve or disapprove the choice of the Bishop. As no emolument attaches to the office of Bishop Suffragan, as such, it no doubt does happen on occasions that the bishop is selected from the ranks of beneficed clergymen; but care is taken that in such case the needs of the parish are duly provided for when an incumbent is selected for appointment.

Irish Lights Board—Report of Inspections.

SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee): To ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade whether the Commissioners of Irish Lights have given any explanation why in the four years 1898 to 1901 inclusive they forwarded no reports of inspections of local seamarks in Ireland, corresponding to those of the Trinity House and the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses; what is the number of Irish seamarks; the number inspected and reported on to the Board of Trade in the year 1902; and is the Board entitled by statute to insist on regular and systematic inspections by, and reports from, the Commissioners of Irish Lights.

(*Answered by Mr. Bonar Law.*) The Commissioners of Irish Lights urge that the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, does not render it incumbent upon them to make local inspections within any specified periods, but merely as they think fit. The number of Irish seamarks under local jurisdiction is roughly estimated at 350, including lighthouses, buoys, and beacons. Fourteen reports were received from the Commissioners in 1902, but the Board are unable to specify the number of seamarks covered by those reports. The Board of Trade are not empowered by statute to insist on regular and systematic inspections, but, as stated in my reply on Wednesday † to the hon. Member for South Dublin, I am in hopes that the representation which has been addressed to the Commissioners will receive their attention.

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† See page 1181.

Preferential Tariffs.

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland): To ask the President of the Board of Trade, with reference to the differential duties levied by the United States, Portugal, and other countries on certain classes of their imports from the United Kingdom, what were the values of those imports in each case for the five years preceding and the five years succeeding the imposition of such duties.

(*Answered by Mr. Bonar Law.*) As stated in my reply to the hon. Member for the South Molton Division on the 15th instant,† the differentiation against certain British products by the United States and Portugal does not take the form of imposing increased duties, but of withholding from such products the special concessions granted to certain other countries by reciprocal agreements and treaties of different dates. If the hon. Member will specify the years for which he desires to have statistics of any particular article, I will see what can be given.

Goods Imported into the United Kingdom Ready for Use.

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state what proportion of the imports into the United Kingdom consists of goods which arrive ready for use by the consumer and have not to pass through any process of manufacture in this country, and the value of such goods, together with the corresponding figures ten years ago and twenty years ago.

(*Answered by Mr. Bonar Law.*) I regret that it is not possible to give the information asked for—

Hanwell Poor Law Schools.

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL: To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will refuse to sanction any proposal of the managers of the Hanwell Poor Law Schools to increase the certificate of that school by 387 beds by certifying the old ophthalmic block for the reception of normal children.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) I have not received an application from the managers for an increase of the certified accommodation at these schools, but I was recently informed by them of a proposal to utilise some of the iron buildings until lately occupied by ophthalmic children. Before expressing an opinion on this proposal I asked for further particulars, and at the same time I pointed out to the managers that I should not be prepared to sanction an increase of the maximum number of children maintained at the schools.

Macroom Workhouse—Dismissal of Dr. Barrett.

Dr. THOMPSON (Monaghan, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Secretary of the Local Government Board, in April, 1902, intimated to Dr. Barrett, recently Medical Officer of the Macroom Workhouse, against whom no charge of neglect of duty has been made during his service, that if he did not resign within a week he would be dismissed without further notice and without pension; and, if so, will he state whether this action was taken with his sanction; and whether the Local Government Board would furnish Dr. Barrett with copies of its order and correspondence in relation thereto.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) For a number of years there had been constant friction between the officers of this workhouse, a condition of things for which Dr. Barrett was held to be mainly responsible. In 1899 the guardians suspended him from the performance of his duties, and the Local Government Board thereupon directed a sworn inquiry to be held into the matter, as a result of which the Board came to the conclusion that the step taken by the guardians was justified. Dr. Barrett was made aware of the charges preferred against him in the ordinary way. Subsequently to this inquiry he gave an undertaking to work harmoniously with the other officers of the union, and in view of this undertaking the Local Government Board did not at the time press for his resignation. He continued, however, to be a source of constant trouble to the guardians, and the Board accordingly formed the opinion that in the interests of good government of the workhouse he should be called upon to retire from the position of medical officer, failing which the extreme step of dismissal would be resorted to. An intimation to this effect was duly conveyed to him in April, 1902. He resigned, and was granted a retiring pension. It is not proposed to furnish him with a copy of the correspondence that has passed in the matter.

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† See page 948.

Army Blankets from South Africa at Woolwich Dockyard.

SIR THOMAS DEWAR (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that 20,000 blankets from South Africa have been recently discovered in store at Woolwich Dockyard; and will he state whether these blankets were used for service in the field, the date on which they were shipped from South Africa, and the circumstances under which they were dispatched to this country without being first disinfected.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) There are at Woolwich 20,000 blankets which have been handed over from transports coming home. These were washed before being handed over by the Admiralty, but as an additional precaution they are being disinfected. It is not known whether any of these blankets were used in the field, nor can any date of despatch from South Africa be specified, as they were only taken over by the War Department in bulk.

Telegfaphic Interruptions between United Kingdom and Australia.

SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the interruptions which have taken place in through telegraphic communication, *via* Canada, between the United Kingdom and Australia have been confined to that section of the line located in the island of Vancouver; and whether this section of the line was specially laid for the purposes of the Pacific cable.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain*). The interruptions which have taken place in through telegraphic communication, *via* Canada, between the United Kingdom and Australia have been confined to the Vancouver Island land lines, the western section of which was specially laid by the Canadian Pacific Railway for the purposes of the Pacific Cable.

The Pacific Cable.

SIR JOHN COLOMB: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state whether the sea route of the Pacific Cable was that recommended by Lord Selborne's Committee, and if not, to what extent and why was it varied; and whether there is any proposal under consideration for linking the cable with the American cables at Honolulu.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain*). The sea route of the Pacific Cable is that recommended by Lord Selborne's Committee. That Committee left open the choice between Fanning and Palmyra Islands for the mid-Pacific landing place, but Fanning Island was found on further investigation to be the preferable station. The question of a connection with the United States Cable at Honolulu has been raised, but no action has yet been taken in that direction.

SIR JOHN COLOMB: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can state if the capital outlay in connection with the Pacific Cable includes the cost of special surveys made by the Royal Navy.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) The cost of special surveys is not included. The soundings made by the surveying ships of the Royal Navy on the route of the Pacific Cable, though of great value, were incidental to and made in the course of their ordinary operations. The special detailed survey required for the determination of the exact route to be followed by the cable was carried out, not by the Royal Navy but by the contractors for the construction and laying of the cable.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AMENDMENT BILL.

[THIRD READING.]

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University) said that before he referred to the merits of the Bill he thought he ought to say a few words as to the method by which this measure had arrived at its present stage without one single word being addressed to the House by its promoters in defence of the Bill. This was a Bill to repeal the provisions of an Act passed in 1899, under which the Board of Education had acted ever since. Such a Bill should have been brought in and promoted on the responsibility of the Board of Education itself, and he congratulated the Secretary to the Board of Education upon having discovered a new method of passing through this House Departmental Bills.

MR. PURVIS (Peterborough) called attention to the fact that there were not forty Members present.

House counted.

*__MR. SPEAKER__: Less than forty Members being present the proceedings will be suspended until a quorum is formed.

SIR JOHN GORST, resuming his speech at five minutes past one, said that when he was interrupted by the Motion to count the House he was endeavouring to show that the Bill under consideration was intended to deal with a provision of an Act of Parliament under which the Board of Education had acted for some years. In his opinion, a proposal to repeal such a provision ought to be made on the responsibility of the Board of Education, and not of a private Member. He might call this "surreptitious legislation," because the Board of Education, instead of bringing in the Bill itself, had had it brought in by a private Member, although, no doubt, it was concocted and prepared at the Education Office.

*__THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION__ (Sir WILLIAM ANSON, Oxford University): May I say I never heard anything of the Bill until it was introduced.

SIR JOHN GORST: I said the Bill was prepared by the Board of Education, and I will undertake to prove it.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE (Sussex, Horsham): May I at once correct the right hon. Gentleman. I drafted the Bill myself without any previous communication with the Board of Education.

SIR JOHN GORST said he had never heard of a Bill intended to deal with the policy of the Board of Education, and to repeal an Act of Parliament, being brought in under such circumstances, and he still felt that it had been done with the approval and sanction of the Board of Education. The Bill had been run through its various stages without a single word being said upon it, and although the hon. Member for Horsham knew it was to be opposed on the Motion for the Third Reading, he did not get up in his place and say anything in support of it. It was only by the purest accident that he himself happened to be present when the Bill was about to be read a third time, and was enabled thus to secure, at least, that some discussion of it should take place before it was finally passed. He was afraid that the arguments he was about to address to the House would not reach the ears of those who would presently vote upon the measure, and he could only say that he deeply lamented that that should be so.

Now he came to the merits of the Bill. The object of the Bill was to repeal a clause in an Act, passed in 1899, to protect unhappy, defective, and epileptic children. It was intended to protect them from being herded together in large institutions. There were two methods of dealing with children who were under public management, and the better way, in his opinion, was to make a kind of home for them—a small home where a child could have individual attention, and where there was someone whom it could look up to and love, and also where it could mix with a few companions of its own age. That was the natural and best way in which a child should be brought up. When deprived of a natural home, the best thing that could be done for it, in the interests of the child itself, was to provide it with an artificial home. This method of providing small homes had been adopted in various cases, with the greatest advantage and success. The other method of bringing up children was the more popular one of herding them together in grand institutions and fine buildings, with large staffs and all the modern appliances. There they were brought up by a sort of machinery, they could not have individual attention, nor was there any particular person to whom they could look up and love, and they, therefore, lost the greater part of the advantages in the moral education of a child not attached to the atmosphere of home life. These institutions always had been and always would be extremely popular. There was, of course, the patronage of appointing the secretary, the superintendent, and the matron, there was the delight of building, and of having plans prepared and altering them from time to time. Then there was the ceremony of laying the foundation stone, which was attended by the principal persons in the county, sometimes even by a Member of Parliament, or a Member of the Government, and in some cases actually by Royalty itself, and, finally, there was the institution itself, a magnificent building which constituted a record of the charity and public spirit of the promoters. But, after all, these institutions were not favourable to the children put into them. On this point there was a Committee appointed in 1893 or 1894 by the Government of the day, and the chairman of the committee was the late Mr. Mundella, than whom nobody took a greater interest in the welfare of children. A large number of persons of different political complexion and ideas in regard to children gave evidence before that Committee, which, although it was appointed to inquire into the treatment of children in workhouse schools, eventually came to deal with the care of children generally, and reported unanimously against the practice of herding them together in these institutions, and in favour of their separation in small families and small establishments such as he had described.

If he wanted to occupy the time of the House he could quote many passages from the Report of the Committee, and from the evidence given before it, which would very strongly support the case he was endeavouring to lay before the House, but he would content himself with saying that both the evidence and the Report conclusively established two things. The first, that these great congregations of children were very dangerous to their physical health. Ophthalmia, ringworm, and other diseases became very rife among the children, and could not be easily controlled. Although the children were kept extremely clean, were under medical supervision, and were excellently well fed, there being nothing wanting in regard to their care, disease dogged these great institutions. Secondly, the great majority of opinion was that the aggregation of children in those large institutions was extremely detrimental to their moral character and to all those qualities which were produced by love, affection, friendship, and human, treatment and care. If this method of aggregation was deleterious to healthy children it was still more dangerous to children, suffering from any kind of weakness or affliction. In this connection he would like to quote the Report issued in 1901 by the Metropolitan Asylums Board, which body had charge of all the defective children in the Metropolis. This was what that Report said—

> "The original policy settled by the Board on the recommendation of the Special Committee *re* children, and approved by the Local Government Board, was to provide for defective children by 'small houses in the vicinity of the special schools of the School Board for London where groups of children, say eight in each, could be properly attended and cared for by foster mothers.' . . . The word small coupled with the emphatic mention of individual care stands out on every page of the evidence given before the Poor Law Schools Committee of 1894–6 as the characteristic sought and advocated by witnesses of experience, and the Committee themselves adopted this view. Speaking of homes for normal children (the

case for the borderland children is naturally much stronger) the Committee say that it is of the first importance to keep the homes small."

He would also read a letter he had received that morning from Mr. James Brown, an energetic member of the Metropolitan Asylums Board—

> "Feeble-minded children attend a Board school close by, and only in classes of small numbers. To house them in large buildings or to put a number of houses close together would ruin the scheme, the essence of which is that they should mix with strong-minded children and have bright surroundings. We tried to get self-contained houses for eight each, but finding this difficult we took several larger—one up to twenty. We all lament this now, and from experience shall not repeat it. In another case we took three small houses and joined them together, but the matron or mother strongly recommends us in any future case to take houses not accommodating more than eight children, and to make them self-contained and a house mother to each. These children require constant and individual care, and we have many cases of great improvement resulting from this course. The whole scheme would fail if the numbers of those thrown together were large—they would imitate each other and so deteriorate. We have also taken away from Darenth Asylum 150 children of the educable type, and put them into a large home at Ealing. The removal from a large asylum into a comparatively small home with garden and playgrounds has had a marvellous effect even on those children who were imbeciles. In the smaller homes the medical care is much more personal and effective, and this is very important—also the feeding. The effect of the smaller homes is that the mother is able to detect and know intimately the mental and physical condition of each child, which would be impossible in the larger numbers. We have now obtained sanction to keep children up to twenty or twenty-one years of age, and shall have them taught, as far as possible, simple trades. This again makes it imperative to keep the number small so as to insure careful personal attention."

That was the testimony of a gentleman who had given a considerable portion of his time to the care of these unhappy children. The colonist system, whilst it had not all, had a great many of the defects of the great institution system, and one of its greatest was that it was enormously costly. It had been very much taken up by Boards of Guardians for the children of paupers, and he would like to give an instance of the cost of carrying it out. The Board of Guardians of Greenwich had adopted it, and they had to spend £178,000 to house 600 children, or £290 for very child housed. St. Olaves spent £148,000 for 600 children, or £246 for every child.

He now came to the genesis of the Bill. It referred to the defective as well as the epileptic, and all the opposition came from some persons who had established a great epileptic institution, and who desired to have the children sent there at the cost of the ratepayers of the various districts sending them. That institution was not established for children, and at the present moment there were only two boys in it under the age of sixteen, and no girls, whilst there were 130 grown-up people. What was proposed by the manager of this school was to put among these grown up men and women a number of children, who would be sent into the institution and paid for by the various School Boards and other educational authorities. This system of mixing children with adults was extremely objectionable, and ought not to be adopted except after very careful inquiry. A good deal had been said at times in that House about children in workhouses, and about the evils which attached to keeping them there, especially in cases where they were mixed up with older people. In his opinion, if they were going to have institutions for children, those institutions should be retained exclusively for children, and the Board of Education ought not to allow the children to be mixed up with adult people. Now the Chalfont Colony was a most excellent institution, and he had no desire to say a single word against it. The objection which he was putting before the House in regard to the treatment of children in the institution did not apply to the treatment of adult people. The authorities of that institution after it was opened lost no time in applying to the Board of Education for a certificate which would enable the educational authorities to pay the cost of maintaining defective and epileptic children in their institution. They applied to the Board of Education to certify it, and to exempt it from the operation of the Act on the ground that the colony existed before the Act was passed.

MR. HEMPHILL (Tyrone, N.): Where is this institution?

SIR JOHN GORST: In Buckinghamshire. The authorities of it applied first to be exempted from the Act on the ground that they were in existence before the Act was passed. They then applied to be allowed to have twenty-four instead of fifteen children in each home. Their only reason for that application was that the cost of maintaining a home for only fifteen would be disproportionately large. They alleged in their memorial that it would increase the cost of maintaining the children by £4 a child a year, or, roughly speaking, 1s. 6d. per week, so that the Board of Education was invited to act contrary to an Act of Parliament for the sake of saving 1s. 6d. per week in the maintenance of these children. In the memorial which the managers of the institution addressed to the Board of Education, they said—

> "It must be admitted that there would be advantages in very small homes for, say, six or eight children each, but in the case of epileptics this would obviously be impracticable on account of the excessive cost of supervision."

The managers were, in fact, really convicted out of their own mouths, for, while recognising that it would be very much better to have the children in small homes, they wanted to place them in larger numbers for the sake of saving 1s. 6d. per week in the cost of their maintenance. He was surprised that the Board of Education should suggest giving up the interest and welfare of the children on such grounds.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE: I think the right hon. Gentleman should read the whole of the paragraph.

SIR JOHN GORST: The hon. Member will have an opportunity afterwards of replying to me, and he can do so.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE: Evidently the right hon. Gentleman does not wish to place the whole paragraph before the House.

SIR JOHN GORST: If the hon. Member talks in that way I certainly will read the whole paragraph.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE: It is on page 50.

SIR JOHN GORST continuing—

> "It must be admitted that there would be advantages in very small homes for, say, six or eight children each, but in the case of epileptics this would obviously be impracticable on account of the excessive cost of supervision. If this number be exceeded, it is believed that all the essential points of the home system that are capable of being retained with fifteen children can equally well be retained with twenty-four, while the latter number has also some actual advantages. If there are as many as fifteen children in a home, it will certainly happen that they will not all be quite congenial to one another, and in the smaller home the children are thrown more together than in the somewhat larger one for, say, twenty-four, in which also more opportunity is given to the inmates to form pleasant companionships. In short, in the somewhat larger home there is a possibility of a modified classification within the home itself, as distinguished from the stricter classification as between one home and another."

It came to this, that 1s. 6d. a week was the measure of the difficulty which they detailed in their memorial. They went on to say that epileptics, more than ordinary children, needed to be kept bright and happy. That was what he himself had contended. It was necessary in the case of ordinary children, and it became still more necessary in the case of these unfortunate epileptic children. This institution wished to be allowed to have free growth. It evidently contemplated a very great increase of its establishment and a very great extension of the present buildings. Well, he had no objection to its free growth and development so long as it was not carried on at the expense of these unhappy children. In regard to small homes he would like to quote a few words from another Report. It was a passage from a letter sent by the Society to the Local Government Board on the 20th March, 1900, and was in the following words—

> "A large proportion of the cases received at the Chalfont Colony are paupers, and my Committee have thus had opportunities of observing the effects upon epileptics of workhouse life. The pauper cases received at the colony may be divided broadly into two classes—those on the one hand whose previous residence at the workhouse has been of short duration, and those on the other hand who have been subjected during more lengthy periods to the depressing influences of those institutions. Among the former class have been many of the best and most hopeful cases received at the colony; the latter class, almost without exception, have been found to have already sunk to such a hopeless degree of

mental and moral deterioration as to have lost, not only the capacity, but even the desire, for any improvement of their condition."

These were the people among whom it was desired to place the epileptic children, greatly, as he ventured to say, to their deterioration and disadvantage. However much it might tend to economy and saving, he did not think that such a practice should be permitted. The motives which he had mentioned in the earlier part of his speech for the creation of these institutions for the congregation of children were very powerful with some people, and certainly would tend to encourage them to go in for establishing more of such institutions. It had been said that the colony system was an excellent one because it brought epileptic children into outdoor life. No doubt living in the open air was one of the best things that could be arranged for these children, but the colony system was not necessary to enable them to lead such a life. They could lead it under much more favourable conditions if they were placed in small homes. Before he sat down he wanted to say a word or two about the proposals of the Bill. It would probably be said by the Secretary to the Board of Education that the Bill did not interfere with the carrying out of the views to which he had given expression, because the Board of Education would have power to make rules and regulations. He, however, had had longer experience of the Board of Education than his hon. friend. He should not in the least doubt his perfect sincerity and genuineness in making use of that argument, but he would like to tell him, and he would like to tell the House, that these public Departments were like wax in the hands of influential people who pressed for these licences to enable them to evade the letter of the law. These institutions possessed enormous influence; he defied the Board of Education to stand against the pressure that would be brought to bear upon it unless it had the protection of an Act of Parliament. If a case had been made out for an alteration of the law the change ought to be in the direction of making the limits more elastic by increasing the number in each house or institution, and not in the direction of abolishing the limits altogether and substituting the feeble resistance of the Board of Education to the strong pressure, social, political, and Parliamentary, which would be brought to bear upon them by these institutions. Then there was the ridiculous farce of laying upon the Table of the House for a certain period the rules made by the Board of Education. Everybody who had much Parliamentary experience knew how perfectly futile and ridiculous was such a safeguard. It was really not worth the paper upon which it was printed. It made no difference whatever to the action of the Board, and it in no way protected the Board from the pressure to which it would be subjected. He had detained the House at considerable length, but it was because he felt very strongly on the matter. He was indignant that these poor children should be deprived of the safeguards and the protection provided by the enactment it was now sought to repeal. All he asked for was an inquiry, and he thought he had made out a case. At an earlier stage he had suggested to the promoters that a Select Committee should hear what there was to be said on the two sides, undertaking, that if the Committee reported in favour of the further progress of the Bill, to withdraw his opposition. His overtures were rejected, but he thought he had shown that the law ought not to be altered without the matter being discussed and inquired into. He therefore moved that the Bill be recommitted to a Select Committee.

*SIR FRANCIS POWELL (Wigan), in seconding the Motion, said he had been interested in the Bills of 1893 and 1899, which were really sister measures and required to be taken together. It was impossible to enter into the investigation of this subject without feeling the great danger involved in the multiplication of overgrown institutions. When the measure of 1899 was under discussion in another place, the then President of the Council declared that the Council would not look with favour on very large institutions, but would strictly limit their numbers. There was a similar condemnation of overgrown institutions in the Report of the Departmental Committee on Defective and Epileptic Children, upon which the Bill of 1899 was founded. Under that measure security was taken that the houses should not be larger than a certain size, or more than four in number, in other words, each colony was not to exceed sixty. That was a sufficiently large number, and to go beyond it would be mischievous to the cause which all had at heart. If larger numbers were permitted, the institutional spirit was apt to arise, making mechanical the arrangements which ought to be free, and destroying the elasticity and adaptability to constantly varying circumstances, which were absolutely necessary in dealing with young people of the class under discussion. The Government reports on education last year, while speaking of a considerable increase in the provision for the blind and deaf, stated that except in day schools no provision whatever had been made for defective children. Before they conferred larger powers, Members were entitled to demand that the powers already existing should be fully exercised. According to the Report of last year, no provision at all had been made for epileptics under the Act. That showed that the existing powers were not fully exercised, and it was the duty of those interested in this subject to see that the children received the full benefit of the legislation already passed before larger powers were sought. Reference was made in the Memorandum on the print of the Bill to the colony system. It appeared that in Germany there were now thirty of these homes, and fifty more would probably be added in the course of a short time. In Norway there was one large institution with 180 pupils. That was a sufficient warning as to the very great danger of proceeding in the manner proposed with the risk of establishing overgrown institutions. In the Copenhagen Institution there were three departments. The first department was preparatory for testing whether the child was suitable for the training; the second department was for manual training; and the third was of an elementary character. In one of these institutions they had eleven different kinds of looms and other machinery, a condition which, in his opinion, was more calculated to cause insanity among these afflicted children than to cure it. From the remarks he had made he thought he had shown that there were grounds for an inquiry. Having before them the warning of the promoters of the Bill elsewhere in 1889, the warning of the Commissioners themselves whose Reports he had read, and the warning given by the constitution of these overgrown, and, therefore, undesirable institutions abroad, they should walk warily and cautiously, and not sanction this legislation until after the most careful inquiry and the most careful consideration of all the facts which such an inquiry would lay before the country. He begged to second the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'be,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 're-committed to a Select Committee.'"—(*Sir John Gorst.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE said the speech they had heard this afternoon from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University, a former Vice-President of the Board of Education, was one which deserved attention, for, of course, in a matter of this sort his opinion must carry very great weight with the House. He hoped, however, that he might be able to convince the House, or such portion of it as he might reach, that it was unnecessary to refer this Bill to a Select Committee. It was greatly to be regretted that the question would be decided by the votes of those who had not had an opportunity of listening to the arguments used on either side. He could assure his right hon. friend that his misgivings in regard to this system of aggregation were, at all events, misplaced on the present occasion. His right hon.

friend the Member for Cambridge University and the hon. Member for Wigan had directed their speeches not to the rejection of this measure, but only to its suspension until it had been considered by a Committee. They asked what they are pleased to term an inquiry. Of course that was a familiar form of procedure in this House, and hon. Members were very well aware that if they wanted to see the end of a Bill at this time of the session, one of the best ways was to try to get it referred to a Select Committee for inquiry, because they might be reasonably certain that after that inquiry there would be no time for it to get through the House. He wished to point out that inquiry might be twofold. There might be inquiry into the subject at large, or into the working of the Act which this Bill sought to amend. With regard to inquiry into the subject at large he was not sure that either of his hon. friends had made it clear to the House that there had been close inquiry into the subject already. There was an inquiry undertaken by a Departmental Committee in 1896. On that Committee there were various eminent persons whose names he need not read to the House. In due time that Committee reported, and its Report covered thirty-eight pages of large print, followed by minutes of the evidence amounting to 283. A very large number of witnesses of all descriptions were examined on that occasion. In the face of that Report he did not think that any human being could hope successfully to contend that the subject had not been sufficiently inquired into. In the Report there was no suggestion of any such limitations as was established by the Act of 1899 which it was sought by this Bill to amend. There was no need for a Committee to inquire into the working of the Act of 1899, because that Act had never worked at all. That was the real answer, and that was in one sense the foundation of his case. The Act of 1899 contained an unfortunate clause by which the Board of Education were precluded from certifying any establishment for boarding and lodging defective or epileptic children if more than fifteen children were boarded and lodged in any one building, or if the establishment comprised more than four such buildings. He submitted to the House, with entire confidence, that owing to the introduction of that limit the Act had been made absolutely unworkable. There never had been a Report presented in regard to the working of the Act, because nothing had ever been done, and so far as this part of his argument was concerned, he might leave it with the statement, which he did not believe could be contradicted, that there was no need for an inquiry into the working of the Act of 1899 because it had never worked at all.

SIR JOHN GORST said that the Metropolitan Asylums Board had a great number of defective children under their charge.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE accepted the statement of his right hon. friend, but the Act required that a Report should be laid before both Houses of Parliament annually, and he had been unable to find that such a Report was ever laid before Parliament.

SIR FRANCIS POWELL said the hon. Member would find mention of this subject in the Report of the Board of Education.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE said his case was that no application had been made for certificates, and that none had been granted. He would, with the permission of the House, state the provisions of the Act itself. The first section provided that the school authority might make arrangements for determining what children in their district were defective or epileptic. By Section 2 they were empowered to make provision—for these children—(1) by special classes, (2) by boarding out near thereto, (3) by establishing schools certified by the Department. They had also power to contribute towards the maintenance of certified schools. But that section also imposed the limitation of fifteen which he had already described. Therefore it was particularly desirable that there should be home life at the disposal of these children. The local authority had power to provide for home life by arranging for boarding out. The present Bill proposed to amend Sub-section (6) of Clause 2. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University had made some allusion this afternoon to what he was pleased to term the method by which this Bill had been dealt with up to the present stage. They all understood that discussion was not very easy or likely to be attained after half-past five on a Friday, or after midnight on other days. No one had had an opportunity of explaining this Bill as he himself would have liked to do, and it was by the goodwill and good feeling of the House that it had been allowed to pass the earlier stages. It was not on account of any inherent wickedness on his part that he had not addressed the House on the subject. But when his right hon. friend alluded to the method by which the Bill had got to the present stage, he wished that he had also alluded to the method by which the clause it was proposed to amend found its way into the original Bill. He had referred to *Hansard* for the purpose of informing himself on that subject. The Bill in 1899 came down to them from the other House. It came to them without this clause in it, and he could not find anything in *Hansard* to show how it was put in the Bill in this House. The record of their proceedings simply stated that certain Amendments were made and the Bill read a third time. He could only believe that the clause was put in somehow or other without proper consideration by the House as to what the effect of it would be. His right hon. friend would correct him if he was wrong, but so far as he could see there was no discussion or opportunity given for discussion by the House when the Bill of 1899 was before them.

SIR JOHN GORST: The Bill was passed in the regular course. The Amendment was proposed and accepted, and there was every opportunity for discussion.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE said he was much obliged to his right hon. friend. What he suggested was that this Amendment was never on the Paper.

SIR JOHN GORST: It was certainly on the Paper. So far as my recollection goes, it was on the Paper for a considerable time, because it was certainly considered by my noble friend the President of the Board of Education and myself before the Bill came on.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE said he could not say more than that he had carefully searched the pages of *Hansard*, and that he could not find the slightest trace of this Amendment there. He accepted the statement, however, of his right hon. friend that it was on the Paper, and that it was considered by himself and the President of the Board of Education. Whatever might be the history of its incubation, when it was brought forward it had a favourable reception from the Board of Education. His right hon. friend had represented that this Bill was an example of the modern fashion for aggregation. He wished to point out to the House that that did not follow. Under this Bill the power of control would still remain with Parliament. At all events, the right hon. Gentleman could not get away from the fact that the Board of Education would take care that the rules made under the Bill were such as would reasonably ensure that nothing would be done which might promote the herding together of children in large establishments, or promote those consequent evils which they very well knew followed from that—evils which were so graphically described in the Report of Mr. Mundella's Committee already alluded to by his right hon. friend.

He wished to point out what the actual defects of the clause had been hitherto, and for that purpose he would draw the attention of the House very briefly to certain letters he had received on the subject, and also to the opinion expressed by the National Society for Employment of Epileptics. He had received a letter dated March 9th, 1903, from Miss Townsend, a lady connected with the National Association for Promoting the Welfare of the Feeble-Minded, who was a member of the Departmental Committee to which he had already referred. She said—

"The 'fifteen' clause has been a stumbling block all along in the way of the establishment of Homes, more especially for epileptics, and it was certainly never contemplated by the Departmental Committee, who confined themselves to deprecating the founding of large institutions. Now that it becomes increasingly evident that institution life must be the lot of the majority of these children all through their lives, there is the less reason for maintaining the clause—always provided that they receive the individual care and training which is essential."

In another letter, dated March 18th, Miss Townsend said—

> "Although personally I prefer small Homes to large ones, yet we all found the limitation to fifteen a vexatious one, and shall be glad to have it removed. My cottage home for eight children works admirably, but if that number is exceeded one may as well have thirty as fifteen, and the greater number is an economy."

A correspondent informed him that a Catholic body in the East End of London had provided the first epileptic school under the Act of 1899, and they were all anxious that the numbers should not be limited to sixty. The Report for 1901 of the hon. Medical Staff of the National Society for Employment of Epileptics contained the following:—

> "It is very unfortunate that the Board of Education have not seen their way to repeal or amend Section 2, Sub-section 6, of the Elementary Education (Defective and Epileptic Children) Act, 1899, which prevents any establishment being certified under the Act if more than fifteen children are boarded and lodged in any one building, or if the institution contains more than four such buildings. . . . It is grievous to think that an Act which was intended to benefit these children should have so contrary an effect."

In a Memorial, dated March 6th, 1900, to the Board of Education, that Society pointed out their objections to the conditions imposed by Section 2, Sub-section 6, and asked the Board to recommend Parliament to amend the Act. And then the Memorial went on to say—

> "It is a most important feature of the colony or family system that boys and girls should be received in the same establishment, though in different Homes, and this would limit the number of Homes for each sex to two, which is quite insufficient for purposes of classification. In classifying the inmates of such an establishment, it would be necessary to have regard to the mental condition and the severity of the epilepsy, and also to character and previous bringing up. If this latter point were disregarded, serious danger would be incurred. It is obvious, therefore, that two Homes would not give scope for such classification as is necessary, even if no provision were made for those most necessitous of all cases—the epileptic children who are also blind, or deaf and dumb, or otherwise afflicted."

And then the Memorial went on to speak of the difficulty of arranging the children in different classes—

> "In an establishment limited to sixty epileptic children, of all ages and of varying degrees of physical and mental capacity, it would be impossible without an unreasonably large teaching staff to arrange for the proper division of the children into classes. The same objection would apply still more strongly to the necessary industrial training. For the proper industrial training of the children, according to their respective inclinations and capacity, and with a view to their becoming wholly or partially self-supporting, it is essential that a considerable variety of occupations should be taught, and, consequently, that there should be a variety of capable instructors, which would, economically speaking, be impracticable in an establishment limited to about thirty children of each sex, of whom, at any time, only the minority would be of such an age as to be receiving regular industrial training. This difficulty could not properly be avoided by having separate establishments for these elder children, because it is an essential feature of the family system upon which such establishments should be based that children of various ages should be brought together."

And then they refer again to the colony system as it is worked abroad. Of Bielefeld they said—

> "It is undoubtedly the one which is least institutional—the one which gives the fullest scope to individual character and development. It is at the same time the largest, having a population of over 1,500 epileptics of all ages, children and adults."

And then they go on to say—

> "Even if there were *à priori* grounds for believing the limitations of Section 2, Sub-section 6, to be wise, it would, nevertheless, appear to be extremely undesirable to stamp in advance a uniform pattern upon all epileptic establishments in this country, and to prevent their free growth and development upon such lines as time and trial may show to be best. Such restriction as is justifiable under any circumstances would appear to be so only when formulated as the result of experience, not when imposed in anticipation of it."

The Board of Education stated in reply that the subject had been recently brought before them in connection with similar memorials from the London and other School Boards—

> "The Board are, however, unable to hold that a sufficient case has been made out for the repeal or amendment of the clause in question in an Act which has not as yet had a practical trial."

He quite admitted that that was a very good answer at the time, viz., in June 1900; but the Act had now been in existence for four years, and it was quite impossible for the Board of Education to give the same answer to a similar memorial addressed to them at the present time. It was easy enough to speak lightly or deprecatingly of the work done by this great society; but he and his friends wished by means of the Bill under discussion to enlarge their sphere of usefulness, and to relax the conditions under which they were fettered and bound by the Board of Education.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland) said that after the exceedingly powerful speech of the right hon Member for Cambridge University, it would be well to have some further public inquiry before they committed themselves to the passing of this amending Bill. The hon. Member said that the Act of 1899 had not worked well, but if he would refer to the Report of the Education Department he would find a couple of pages devoted to the subject in which it was stated that the Act had been adopted, and satisfactory arrangements had been made in no fewer than 109 day schools and classes.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE said that that referred to schools and not to institutions.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL said that the Report went on to say that there was a tendency to board out children and make arrangements in regard to institutions. He thought, therefore, that the Act had not been the dead letter described by the hon. Gentleman. One of the recommendations of the Select Committee was that the school authorities should have power to send their children to these institutions the numbers in which did not exceed twenty; and apparently the Bill under discussion did, to a considerable extent, run counter to the recommendations of the Committee. The object of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University was not to reject the Bill, but that it should be sent to a Select Committee for inquiry.

*SIR JOHN BATTY TUKE (Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities) said that the Act of 1899 had not worked, inasmuch as it was unworkable. He supported the Bill, the object of which was to extend the usefulness of the existing machinery. It was a great relief to his mind when he heard the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University say that he had not visited any of these institutions. He was perfectly certain that if the right hon. Gentleman had visited Rickmanshurst he would never have confused the issue by mixing it up in his description of establishments in which large numbers of epileptics and weak-minded persons were aggregated. He knew that institution by personal inspection. It occupied a ridge of high-lying land with pretty surroundings, and was composed of various houses scattered over the area, in which were distributed some 150 or 160 epileptics. He could assure hon. Members that he had never seen a similar institution for epileptics in such admirable condition. He had made careful inquiry and could speak very highly of the work done by this organisation. It had failed in a certain number of cases, but in the vast majority of cases it had prevented the degradation to which epileptics were so liable. To compare their condition with that of the ordinary occupants of a lunatic asylum was ridiculous. His argument was that if so much good had been done by such institutions to adult epileptics, how much more would they benefit young epileptics whose disease was not confirmed.

*SIR WILLIAM ANSON said he wished to say that this was a private Member's Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University had stated that the Bill had emanated from the Board of Education, and that he was even prepared to prove it. He could assure the right hon. Gentleman that he knew nothing of the Bill until he saw it in print. The hon. Member for Horsham, who stated that he had drafted the Bill himself, was good enough to send him a copy of it, asking him to express his opinion about it. He thought it was a measure which would turn the Act of 1899, which, so far as epileptic children were concerned, was a dead letter, into a useful and valuable Act. He had had representations of a very forcible character from the London School Board, and also from the National Society for Epileptics, as to the impossibility of working the Act under present conditions. He had taken expert opinion, and was advised that this Bill would serve a useful purpose, and that epileptic children would benefit if the Bill were passed. He wished to correct a misapprehension on the part of the hon. Member for Cleveland who talked about the difference of opinion as to the operation of the Act He thought if the hon. Member looked over the Act he would see that there were a good many provisions which did not affect epileptic children at all, but which related entirely to defective children. The portion of the Act which provided for schools and classes for defective children had come into operation, but it had been found impossible under the Act to provide homes and colonies for epileptic children who could not go to school without risk of injury to themselves or to others, or of disturbance of the work of the school. A Return showed that in the case of defective children four small boarding-houses had been established, accommodating thirty, twenty, fifteen, and six children in separate homes, and these children were taught in schools in the immediate neighbourhood, and separate schools for such children had been started in many places. But the Bill of his hon. friend was intended to lead to the possibility of boarding out and teaching epileptic children who could not go out to a school. The only way of dealing with such children was to provide homes for them in which they could be nurtured and taught in sufficient numbers, to enable the children to be properly classified and the school properly staffed. What had been said about the danger of aggregation of children arose from the confusion between Poor Law children, who were normal children, and who should associate as far as possible with other children, and epileptic children, who could not associate with other children, because they might injure themselves or others. There was no desire to bring together a great number of these children; but it was desirable, if not essential, that they should be brought together in sufficient numbers to enable them to be properly taught and have opportunities of companionship. These were the reasons which induced him as a private Member, and not as a representative of the Government in any way, to vote for this measure.

SIR JOSEPH LEESE (Lancashire, Accrington) said that the Act of 1889 had been a dead letter so far as epileptic children were concerned, and he supported the Bill because it would make provision for the education and training of such children.

Question put.

The House divided: Ayes 149; Noes 87. (Division List No. 123.)

AYES.

Abraham, W. (*Cork, N.E.*)
Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Austin, Sir John
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Baldwin, Alfred
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Beach, Rt. Hon. Sir M. Hicks
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bignold, Arthur
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Bowles, T. Gibson (*Lynn Regis*)
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Campbell, Rt Hn J. A (*Glasg.*)
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cautley, Henry Strother
Cavendish, V.C.W. (*Derbyshire*
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chapman, Edward
Charrington, Spencer
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Collings, Right Hon. Jesse
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Colston, Chas. Edw H. Athole
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cranborne, Viscount
Cripps, Charles Alfred
Cross, Alexander (*Glasgow*)
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Denny, Colonel
Devlin, Chas. Ramsay (*Galway*)
Dickson, Charles Scott
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir William Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Faber, E. B. (*Hants, W.*)
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Garfit, William
Gilhooly, James
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Godson, Sir Augustus Frederick
Gordon, Hn. J E (*Elgin & N'rn*
Gordon, J. (*Londonderry, S.*)
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Groves, James Grimble
Gunter, Sir Robert
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Hatch, Ernest Frederick G.
Heath, Arthur H. (*Hanley*)
Helder, Augustus
Hobhouse, Rt Hn H. (*Somers't, E*
Hoult, Joseph

Howard, J. (*Midd., Tott'ham*
Hutton, John (*Yorks. N.R.*)
Knowles, Lees
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (*Cornwall*)
Lees, Sir Elliott (*Birkenhead*)
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (*Accrington*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Francis William
Loyd, Archie Kirkman
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*
Lucas, Reginald J (*Portsmouth*)
Macdona, John Cumming
MacDonnell, Dr. Mark A.
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
Malcolm, Ian
Maxwell, W. J. H. (*Dumfriessh.*
Mitchell, Edw. (*Fermanagh N.*
Mitchell, William (*Burnley*)
More, Robt. Jasper (*Shropshire*)
Morgan, J. Lloyd (*Carmarthen*
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mowbray, Sir Robt. Gray C.
Murray, Charles J. (*Coventry*)
Murray, Col. Wyndham (*Bath*
Myers, William Henry
Newdegate, Francis A. N.
Nicholson, William Graham
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, P. J. *Tipperary, N.*)
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Pease, H. Pike (*Darlington*)
Peel, Hn. Wm. R. Wellesley
Pemberton, John S. G.
Pilkington, Lt.-Col. Richard
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Plummer, Walter R.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Purvis, Robert
Randles, John S.
Rattigan, Sir William Henry
Reckitt, Harold James
Redmond, William (*Clare*)
Reid, James (*Greenock*)
Renshaw, Sir Charles Bine
Ridley, Hon. M. W (*Stalybridge*
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, W. W. (*Liverpool*)
Saunderson, Rt. Hn. Col. E. J.
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*)
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (*Strand*)
Stanley, Edw. Jas. (*Somerset*)
Stroyan, John
Sullivan, Donal
Thorburn, Sir Walter
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Tully, Jasper
Wason, John Cathcart (*Orkney*
Welby, Lt-Col A. C. E. (*Taunton*
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Williams Rt Hn J Powell- (*Birm*
Willox, Sir John Archibald
Wilson, Chas. H. (*Hull, W.*)
Wilson, John (*Glasgow*)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (*Bath*
Worsley-Taylor, Hry. Wilson
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Wylie, Alexander

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir William Houldsworth and Mr. Heywood Johnstone.

NOES.

Asquith, Rt. Hon. Herbt. Hy.
Barry, E. (*Cork, S.*)
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.
Black, Alexander William
Boland, John
Brigg, John
Burke, E. Haviland
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Cremer, William Randal
Crombie, John William
Davies, M. Vaughan (*Cardign*
Delany, William
Doogan, P. C.
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Edwards, Frank
Emmott, Alfred
Evans, Sir F. H. (*Maidstone*)
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Fenwick, Charles
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Ffrench, Peter
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert J.
Griffith, Ellis J.
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Charles Seale-
Hayter, Rt Hon Sir Arthur D.
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemphill, Rt. Hon. Charles H.
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (*Bristl, E*
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Joicey, Sir James
Jones, David Brynmor (*Swansea*
Kennedy, Patrick James
Kitson, Sir James
Lambert, George
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, David
Lundon, W.
M'Fadden, Edward
M'Laren, Sir Charles Benj.
Mappin, Sir Fredk. Thorpe
Markham, Arthur Basil
Mellor, Rt. Hn. John William
Morrell, George Herbert
Moss, Samuel
Moulton, John Fletcher
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nolan, Col. John P. (*Galway, N.*
O'Connor, Jas. (*Wicklow, W.*)
O'Doherty, William
O'Donnell, John (*Mayo, S.*)
O'Donnell, T. (*Kerry, W.*)
Palmer, Sir Charles M (*Durham*
Priestley, Arthur
Pym, C. Guy
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Rea, Russell
Reddy, M.
Rickett, J. Compton
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Sadler, Col. Samuel Alexander
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Shaw, Thomas (*Hawick, B.*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Strachey, Sir Edward
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Thomas, Sir A. (*Glam., E.*)
Thomas, David A. (*Merthyr*)
Thomson, F. W. (*York, W. R.*)
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Ure, Alexander
Wallace, Robert
Walton, Joseph (*Barnsley*)
Wanklyn, James Leslie
Wason, E. (*Clackmannan*)
Williams, O. (*Merioneth*)
Wilson, H. J. (*York, W. R.*)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Woodhouse, Sir J T (*Huddersf'd*
Younger, William
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir John Gorst and Sir Francis Powell.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

OUTDOOR RELIEF (PENSIONERS) BILL.

[THIRD READING.]

Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [12th June], "That the Bill be now read the third time."

Question again proposed. Debate resumed.

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) said that this was a Bill to enable boards of guardians not to take into consideration, in connection with an application for outdoor relief, the amount of a pension given to a pensioner from the Army or the Navy where the amount was under 5s. a week. It was the result of the Friendly Societies Bill which the House had previously passed. That Bill provided that boards of guardians, in granting outdoor relief to members of friendly societies, should not take into consideration any sum received from such societies as sick-pay except where it exceeded 5s. a week. To his mind that was an invidious measure. It dealt entirely with one class of the community; but it had the support of the Government, and when it went through the House no hon. Member appeared inclined to embark on a discussion on it. If the House empowered boards of guardians not to take into consideration sick pay received from friendly societies where it did not exceed 5s. a week, how could it refuse to grant a similar exemption in the case of pensioners where, although the pension was not due to thrift, it was, at any rate, due to a better cause—namely, service to the country. He himself did not see why thrift which had taken the form of purchasing an annuity or income from investments should not be taken into consideration by boards of guardians also. He thought it was a great mistake on the part of the Government not to have dealt with the subject as a whole, in order to provide that thrift, no matter in what form it might develop itself, should be entitled to recognition. The Government having assented to the Friendly Societies Bill, it seemed to him reasonable and proper that this Bill should have been brought in. He did not object to it; on the contrary, he was friendly to its being passed through the House. But the Friendly Societies Bill having been thrown out in another place altered the position of matters a great deal. That put this Bill in a rather peculiar position.

He had received a statement from which it appeared that the position of Army pensioners had been so improved under the present Secretary of State for War and some of his predecessors, that it would be only in very rare instances that the Bill would apply to Army pensioners. He wished to point out that the House was now dealing with this matter on its own merits and without precedent. There were three objections to the measure. The effect of the Bill would be to almost invite a pensioner with a pension of 5s. a week to claim relief from a board of guardians. Again, in the case of the Friendly Societies Bill there was this difference. The amount that was not to be taken into consideration was sick-pay; but in the present Bill there was no reference to sick-pay, and the pensioner might be an able-bodied man. That was a very material difference. He quite agreed that every man who had served in the Army or the Navy, and who had received a pension, however small, which showed that he had given service to his country, ought not to be put in the invidious position of being offered the workhouse. If there were any legislation whereby the offer of the workhouse should not be given in such cases, he would personally support it. But there ought to be other provision by the State for such pensioners as might have been disabled either by wounds or ill health. There ought to be a fund, whether under the management of the Government or not, to provide minimum pensions for keeping pensioners out of the workhouse or from the necessity of applying to boards of guardians for relief. He would not move the rejection of the Bill. He would, however, suggest that it should not be passed this session, but should await the fate of the other Bill. He thought that some measures might be taken whereby pensioners with small pensions might be dealt with in such a way as would obviate the necessity of their applying to boards of guardians at all. He was entirely sympathetic with the case of pensioners, and he did not want to see them applying for relief or for admission to a workhouse. They had given their best service to the country as a whole, and no particular locality should be asked to provide for them. It was a matter which should be provided out of Imperial funds. While not expressing any opposition to the object in view, he thought that there would be no harm in delaying the Bill in order to see what would be the fate of the other measure.

If the other measure were eventually passed, he would be quite prepared to support the present Bill. He thought he had suggested a way whereby pensioners with small pensions might not find it necessary to apply to boards of guardians at all; and he certainly would not have intervened on the present occasion had it not been that the Friendly Societies Bill had been rejected in another place.

*COLONEL BLUNDELL (Lancashire, Ince) said he was glad the hon. Gentleman had spoken with reference to insufficient pensions. Small pensions of from 6d. to 8d. a day could not, in his opinion, be dealt with in any other way than by such a measure, because when a man is discharged for "disability" arising from wounds or sickness and is partially able to earn his living, it is not fair to call upon the State to give him a full pension. The Bill was brought forward with the general intention that a pensioner should receive the benefit of the thrift which was exercised for him and at his expense by the State during his service. Therefore a pensioner was in precisely the same position as a member of a friendly society. He also wished to support the measure in the interests of the State. He felt certain it was a very serious thing indeed for the State to have pensioners in the workhouse of the country. One man there deterred ten men from entering the service. He had received a letter from a pensioner, who was now an inmate of St. George's Union in the Fulham Road. He wrote—

> "I have only got 8d. per day for one year and six months; and not being able to do any work through having contracted disease in South Africa, and my pension being so small, I made application for admission to the above workhouse, and because I did not tell the relieving officer that I was in possession or receipt of 8d. per day I was charged at the Rochester Row Police Court and got fourteen days imprisonment. Not only that, but the guardians want me to forfeit all my pension for every day I am in the house; which means that they will take all I have and leave me without the price of a smoke of tobacco. As I am not sixty years of age I have to put up with the same food as the younger men; one pint of gruel night and morning, dry bread, and four pounds of oakum to pick every day, and to pay 8d. a day to be allowed to do it."

That was a sort of thing which was very prejudical; and he certainly hoped that the House of Commons would take steps to prevent it as far as possible. He would urge hon. Members, whatever their views on thrift might be, that, it was desirable for the sake of the State that pensioners should be kept out of the workhouse.

LORD HUGH CECIL (Greenwich) said everyone sympathised with the object of the Bill, so far as it proposed to relieve the lot of those who were in distress after having served their country. Indeed, had it been relevant to the present issue he should have said with great emphasis that he thought the terms which the Government now gave to those who fought their battles abroad were unduly restricted. A man who was wounded in the service of his country ought to receive a pension sufficiently large to place him in the same position as he would have been had he not been wounded. Therefore, he was full of sympathy with the hon. and gallant Gentleman in the purpose he had in view in introducing the Bill. It was largely on that score that he did not propose to oppose it. But he could not help calling attention to the very important principle which was embodied in the Bill. As the hon. Gentleman opposite said very truly, the main objection to the Bill was that it would throw on a locality the duty of supporting those pensioners. There was no doubt that those who had served in the Army and Navy had great claims on the Imperial Exchequer; but they had no special or peculiar claim on local rates. There was a very serious objection to increasing the burden on the rates as distinct from the Exchequer. One of the most notable features of the present system was that whereas they had the most elaborate apparatus for checking extravagance in connection with the Exchequer, there was practically no check whatever on the local bodies which spent the rates. Under this Bill expense would be thrown on the ratepayers, many of them persons of great poverty themselves, and struggling against difficulties. The equitable claim of his hon. and learned friend was not against the local authorities, but against the State. There was another graver objection to this Bill. It recognised, as did the other Outdoor Relief (Friendly Societies) Bill, that the people had a right to outdoor relief independently of their circumstances. The right the people now had to outdoor relief was their poverty and misery, but it was said in this case they were not in granting outdoor relief to have regard to the position of the pensioner at all, they were to look on the relief they gave not as relief given to save from acute distress, but relief to which in some degree the recipient had a right. Once that principle was admitted it would be a logical impossibility to deny that they ought to give the same right of relief to every person in a locality who had been thrifty, and who could establish the fact that it was not through his own fault that he was in distress. That was a principle with which he agreed. It was the principle of old-age pensions. It was a principle of the greatest possible importance, and was in exact opposition to the principle of the Poor Law of 1834, which was that everybody was to have a right to relief if they were in poverty and misery. He, however, thought it was an illogical and slipshod method of dealing with a great question that we should have a lot of little bills dealing with different classes of people and making exceptions of this kind. It would be a far more reasonable way of dealing with this great question if it were laid down once and for all that those who could show that it was not through want of character or thrift that they were in the position they were, had a right to claim relief from the people at large. If that were laid down as a definite proposition, and one which might be made to work, it would claim the support of the whole House. It was a matter for regret that they dealt with this great question of relief by piecemeal measures and upon particular grounds which excited their strong sympathy, but that did not alter the fact that the house in agreeing to this Bill was agreeing to a principle of far-reaching importance; a principle which ought to be extended to a very large class. Though the Bill might not be passed when sent to another place these debates were not without value, because they tended to make the House recognise the nature of the act they were undertaking. It was not desirable to make exceptions of this kind, and less desirable to do so without knowing what they were doing.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

As amended (by the Standing Committee) considered.

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said the Amendment he proposed to move was to substitute £60 for £100 in Clause 3. The object of the Amendment was to insure that the reasons for which the County Courts were established should prevail. It was thought desirable to give small suitors and people in poor circumstances a less expensive method of resorting to the process of the law, and therefore the County Courts were established with limited jurisdiction. He was afraid if the jurisdiction of those Courts was extended it might possibly deprive the people for whom they were established of the privileges which they now had. If the promoters of the Bill could show that the work the County Courts had to do was so small that the jurisdiction could be profitably extended, then he would be prepared not to press his Amendment to a division. He regretted very much that in the ordinary course invoking the assistance of the law should be so expensive, and he would be glad to hear from some of the Members, of what was called the senior branch of the profession, whom he saw present, whether a means of cheapening the cost of the law could not be invented. He had been told that the whole administration of the County Courts was bad; that the fees were higher in proportion than the fees in the other Courts of law, and that the proper course to pursue in a case of this sort would be to overhaul the administration of the County Courts. Whether that was so or not he did not know, but seeing so many eminent Members of the bar around him, he hoped they would be able to throw some light upon the question. With regard to the suggestion to increase the number of Judges at the County Courts, he did not think that was in the power of the promoters of the Bill. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 13, to leave out the words 'one hundred,' and to insert the word 'sixty.'" —(*Sir Frederick Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'one hundred' stand part of the Bill."

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.) opposed the Amendment. The hon. Member himself had expressed his desire for cheaper law and quicker administration, and anyone familiar with the block of business which had taken place at times in the Courts would see the great advantage of supplementing the higher Courts by increasing the jurisdiction of the County Courts. He pointed out that the clause had passed the House without a division, and with regard to the £100 all the discussion that had taken place upstairs was as to whether it should not be increased to £200. As the former registrar of a large Court he ventured to say, that while the Courts had fulfilled their original purpose they had also shown themselves capable of dealing with higher business with advantage, especially to the commercial community. In regard to the suggestion that more Judges would be required, he wished to point out that in many cases the present Judges, excellent as was the work which they did, had not their time fully occupied. As to fees, practice, and procedure, the Rules Committee of the Judges and the Lord Chancellor were able to deal with those matters. He hoped the Amendment would not be pressed.

SIR WILLIAM HOLLAND (Yorkshire, W.R., Rotherham) said he would have preferred to have seen the limit raised to £500. He had been pressed by the Chambers of Commerce to come here to-day and say that they would very much rather see this Bill passed, even with the limit of £100, than that it should be hung up for another session. He opposed the Amendment.

MR. GRIFFITH BOSCAWEN (Kent, Tunbridge) said in his constituency no confidence at all was felt in this Bill. He thought a good case had been made out for the Amendment, and he supported it. It raised the limit by £10, and he did not see that any case had been made out for extending it further.

*SIR JAMES WOODHOUSE (Huddersfield) said the district of the hon. Member was singular in the respect of having no confidence in this Bill. If everybody had been of that opinion they would not have had resolutions passed so unanimously year after year urging this reform on the Government as had been passed by the various Chambers of Commerce. That was a convincing proof of what the country felt upon this matter. The principle of the Bill had been accepted over and over again in this House. The workman's liability and other Acts which incorporated this principle had been referred to the County Courts for decision. And under the Bankruptcy Acts they had practically an unlimited jurisdiction. Under the circumstances he was surprised that so retrogressive a course should be suggested as was proposed by this Amendment. He hoped the House would reject the Amendment.

*MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall) urged his hon. friend to withdraw the Amendment which, if carried, would, he said. practically render the Bill useless. At the request of the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce he had ventured in Grand Committee to move an extension to £500. Our large centres of industry were demanding more economical and speedy methods of obtaining justice. The ability of our County Court Judges was great. They had to administer the same principles of law as in the High Court, and why should not the poor have the same advantages as the rich? Our County Courts had unlimited jurisdiction in bankruptcy, and in other special cases could go much beyond £50. Surely they ought to be considered competent to deal with a common law action of £100.

MR. DUKE (Plymouth) said all who had any knowledge of the Chambers of Commerce in our great towns were well aware of the strong public demand for some change to expedite the administration of justice, especially in commercial suits, and he regarded this Bill as more of a protest against the present system than as a practical means of remedying the existing evils. He could not help feeling at the same time that there was a desire for an extension of the jurisdiction of some of the County Court Judges in some towns where there were Chambers of Commerce. It would be idle, however, to disguise the fact that there was a great deal of difference in the constitution of the County Court bench in various districts. At the present time any two suitors who really desired to settle a dispute could give the County Court Judge in any common law matter unlimited jurisdiction, but what was proposed in this Bill was that the plaintiff, at his own will, should be at liberty to bring an unwilling defendant into jurisdiction which was not the ordinary jurisdiction of the country. There was a strong local demand in some districts for this extension, but this Bill was so defective in failing to provide the necessary means for carrying out the scheme—for instance in not providing for the payment of salaries to County Court Judges corresponding to the very great extension of their duties. They were appointed Judges of small debt Courts forty or fifty years ago at precisely the present terms of remuneration. It might be desirable, if the change proposed by the Bill was to be made, to remodel the County Court system, and to appoint County Court Judges with a view to their discharging the duties which High Court Judges were now appointed to fulfil. It might also be necessary, seeing that the Bill would transfer a great volume of work from the High Court, to revise our present circuit system, which was the foundation of our administration of the common law. There was no doubt a strong feeling in this country in favour of some change in the administration of justice, but he was not satisfied that this Bill, if carried, would have those beneficial results which its promoters anticipated. He regarded the Bill with a good deal of apprehension, though he did not intend to vote for the Amendment.

MR. CHARLES McARTHUR (Liverpool, Exchange) said the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce and the Liverpool Law Society had expressed opinions averse to the extension of the jurisdiction of County Courts. They said these Courts were originally organised for the collection of small debts, and as such were effective, but that their usefulness in this respect would be impaired by the introduction of High Court business which the Courts had not the machinery to deal with and which the Bill did not provide. If a complete change were made in the County Court system, and if it were affiliated to the High Courts, it might then be provided with an organisation fitted to deal with both classes of cases, but that was not provided in the Bill now before the House, and therefore if the matter were pressed to a division he should support the proposal to extend the jurisdiction by only £10 instead of £50.

MR. EUGENE WASON (Clackmannan and Kinross) said that so far as Liverpool was concerned that city already had a Vice Chancellor's Court as well as two County Courts; it was therefore well provided with machinery for dealing with all kinds of cases. He hoped the Bill would be allowed to proceed, and mentioned the Sheriffs' Courts in Scotland as analogous, to show that such Courts were well qualified for the business. He saw no reason why the extra labour should not be put on the County Court Judges.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL (Sir EDWARD CARSON, Dublin University) desired to make a few observations, that it might not be imagined that if the Bill went through it would be possible to carry it out in practice. He was not saying that our County Court system might not be enlarged, but he wished to point out that there was absolutely no machinery in the Bill which would make it operative. With an extension of the jurisdiction, it became absolutely necessary to survey the whole system of County Courts, which were originally established as a poor man's Court for the collection of small debts in a rapid way, and the enlargement of the jurisdiction would not be equally satisfactory in all parts of the country, for the work would be clogged by the Court having to deal with larger cases. A serious question arose whether there should be no appeal from the decisions of the Court except on points of law. In its present shape, so far as he could see, the Bill would not be a workable measure. There was no provision for machinery or for the appointment of the necessary officers, and he did not think it right to let the Amendment pass with the idea on the part of the House that the Government thought there was the least possibility of the Bill working in a satisfactory way.

SIR HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) said those Members who had interested themselves in the subject were familiar with these arguments, which were those used when the extension of the Courts to the present limit was made in 1888.

SIR EDWARD CARSON: You set up your officers then?

SIR HENRY FOWLER: No, it was a great measure of consolidation. These very same objections were raised, and the answer was that experience in the working of the Act would show what additional machinery was required. But he had not since heard of any public inconvenience having arisen, and in reply to the present objections, therefore, he might again say that experience would show what additional machinery would be required. He quite agreed with the Solicitor-General it was necessary to overhaul the whole County Court system, and a promise was made that this should be done in 1888, but never fulfilled. Chambers of Commerce and the mercantile community were anxious for the change; Liverpool, with its Court of Passage with unlimited jurisdiction, with its two County Courts, and with its Vice-Chancellor's Court, was the only exception. The feeling in Manchester was very different, and he did not think the House would be well advised to allow this Bill to drop simply because of difficulties which were purely administrative. Such difficulties the Treasury could provide for. A rearrangement and redistribution of staff might be necessary, and it was not the case generally that County Court Judges were overworked. The Government had not opposed the Second Reading, and it was too late now to declare the Bill unworkable. The House of Commons was bound to respond to the desire of the mercantile classes, and the responsibility for further Amendment should be left to the Government in the other House.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 197; Noes, 53. (Division List, No. 124.)

AYES.

Abraham, W. (*Cork, N.E.*)
Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Allsopp, Hon. George
Ambrose, Robert
Asher, Alexander
Asquith, Rt. Hon. Herbt. Hy.
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Austin, Sir John
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Baldwin, Alfred
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bill, Charles
Black, Alexander William
Bryce, Right Hon. James
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Campbell, Rt Hn J A (*Glasg.*)
Causton, Richard Knight
Charrington, Spencer
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Collings, Right Hon. Jesse
Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cox, Irwin Edw. Bainbridge
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*)
Cremer, William Randal
Crombie, John William
Cross, Alexander (*Glasgow*)
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Cullinan, J.
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Davies, M. Vaughan- (*Cardign*
Delany, William
Denny, Colonel
Devlin, Chas. Ramsay (*Galway*)
Dewar, Sir T. R. (*Tr. Haml'ts*
Dickson, Charles Scott
Doogan, P. C.
Dorington, Rt. Hon. Sir J. E.
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Dunn, Sir William
Edwards, Frank
Emmott, Alfred
Faber, E. B. (*Hants, W.*)
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Fenwick, Charles
Fergusson, Rt. Hn Sir J. (*Manc'r*
Flower, Ernest
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Fuller, J. M. F.
Furness, Sir Christopher
Garfit, William
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert J.
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Gordon, Hn J E (*Elgin and N'rn*
Gore, Hn G. R. C. Ormsby- (*Salop*
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Griffith, Ellis J.
Groves, James Grimble
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Hatch, Ernest Frederick G.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Helder, Augustus
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemphill, Rt. Hon. Chas. H
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (*Bristl, E*
Hobhouse, Rt Hn H. (*Somerset E*
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hornby, Sir William Henry
Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry
Howard, J. (*Midd., Tott'ham*
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Hutton, John (*Yorks, N.R.*)
Johnstone, Heywood
Joicey, Sir James
Jordan, Jeremiah
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir J. H.
Kennedy, Patrick James

Kilbride, Denis
Kitson, Sir James
Knowles, Lees
Lambert, George
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (*Cornwall*
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leamy, Edmund
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (*Accrington*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leng, Sir John
Leveson-Gower, Fredk. N. S.
Lewis, John Herbert
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Francis William
Lundon, W.
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Fadden, Edward
M'Kenna, Reginald
M'Laren, Sir Charles Benj.
Mappin, Sir Fredk. Thorpe
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Maxwell, W. J. H. (*Dumfriessh.*
Mellor, Rt. Hn. John William
Mitchell, Edw. (*Fermanagh, N.*
Mitchell, William (*Burnley*)
Morgan, J. Lloyd (*Carmarthen*)
Morrell, George Herbert
Moss, Samuel
Mount, William Arthur
Mowbray, Sir Robt. Gray C.
Murray, Charles J. (*Coventry*)
Myers, William Henry
Nicholson, William Graham
Nolan, Col. John P. (*Galway, N.*
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, P. J. (*Tipperary, N.*)
O'Brien, William (*Cork*)
O'Doherty, William
O'Donnell, T. (*Kerry, W.*)
Palmer, Sir Charles M. (*Durham*
Parkes, Ebenezer
Peel, Hn. Wm. R. Wellesley
Pemberton, John S. G.
Perks, Robert William
Pilkington, Lt.-Col. Richard
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Plummer, Walter R.
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Power, Patrick Joseph
Priestley, Arthur
Pym, C. Guy
Randles, John S.
Rattigan, Sir William Henry
Rea, Russell
Redmond, William (*Clare*)
Reid, James (*Greenock*)
Renshaw, Sir Charles Bine
Rickett, J. Compton
Ridley, Hon. M. W. (*Stalybridge*
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)
Robson, William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Russell, T. W.
Sadler, Col. Samuel Alexander
Samuel, Herbert L. (*Cleveland*)
Saunderson, Rt. Hn. Col. E. J.
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw, Charles Edw. (*Stafford*)
Shaw, Thomas (*Hawick, B.*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, Louis (*Romford*)
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Stanley, Edw. Jas. (*Somerset*)
Stewart, Sir M. J. M'Taggart
Strachey, Sir Edward
Stroyan, John
Thomas, Sir A. (*Glam., E.*)
Thomas, David Alfred (*Merthyr*
Thomson, F. W. (*York, W. R.*)
Thorburn, Sir Walter
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw. M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Ure, Alexander
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. H. *Sheffi'd*
Walton, Joseph (*Barnsley*)
Wanklyn, James Leslie
Wason, E. (*Clackmannan*)
Wason, John Cathcart (*Orkney*)
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Williams, Rt Hn J Powell- (*Birm.*
Wilson, Chas. H. (*Hull, W.*)
Wilson, H. J. (*York, W. R.*)
Wilson, J. W. (*Worcestersh., N.*)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Woodhouse, Sir J T (*Huddersf'd*
Worsley-Taylor, Hry. Wilson
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Wylie, Alexander
Young, Samuel
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Sir Albert Rollit and
Mr. Brynmor Jones.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
Anstruther, H. T.
Balcarres, Lord
Bignold, Arthur
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bowles, T. Gibson (*Lynn Regis*
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cautley, Henry Strother
Cavendish, V. C. W. (*Derbysh.*
Cecil, Evelyn (*Aston Manor*)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chaplin, Right Hon. Henry
Chapman, Edward
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Coddington, Sir William
Cook, Sir Frederick Lucas
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Fisher, William Hayes
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Forster, Henry William
Gordon, J. (*Londonderry, S.*)
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Gunter, Sir Robert
Hall, Edward Marshall
Hardy, Laurence (*Kent, Ashfd*
Hoult, Joseph
Lawrence, Wm. F. (*Liverpool*
Lees, Sir Elliott (*Birkenhead*)
Macdona, John Cumming
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
Malcolm, Ian
Manners, Lord Cecil
Montagu, Hon. J. Scott (*Hants*)
More, Robt. Jasper (*Shropshire*)
Morgan, Hn. F. (*Monm'thsh.*)
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Murray, Col. Wyndham (*Bath*)
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Pease, H. Pike (*Darlington*)
Purvis, Robert
Seton-Karr, Sir Henry
Shaw-Stewart, M [illegible] (*Renfrew*
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Warde, Colonel C. E.
Welby, Lt.-Col. A. C E (*Taunton*
Williams, Colonel R. (*Dorset*)
Wilson, John (*Glasgow*)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
Sir Frederick Banbury and
Mr. Griffith Boscawen.

SIR WILLIAM TOMLINSON (Preston) moved an Amendment to Clause 3, providing that in actions brought within the limits of the jurisdiction of a County Court by the provisions of the Act, and in which proper steps had been taken by either party to require a jury to be summoned, Section 102 of the County Courts Act, 1888, should be read as if the word "twelve" were substituted for "five." He freely admitted that the County Courts possessed, and deservedly so, a large amount of public confidence, but still there was one element in their administration which was not fully approved by the public. At the present time, if a case had to be tried by a jury, only five jurymen were empanelled, and if the jurisdiction of the Courts were to be extended as proposed by the Bill the result would be to bring in a class of case which now was tried by an ordinary jury. He did not think that suitors should be deprived of their constitutional right and privilege to have a jury of twelve, and his object was to give the parties this right. It was impossible for five men to thresh out the questions brought before them in the same manner as twelve.

Amendment proposed—

> "That in actions brought within the limits of the jurisdiction of a County Court by the provisions of the Act and in which proper steps have been taken by either party to require a jury to be summoned Section 102 of the County Courts Act 1888 shall be read as if the word 'twelve' were substituted for 'five.'"

*MR. BRYNMOR JONES (Swansea District) recognised the spirit in which the Amendment had been moved, and freely admitted that there was no magic in the mere number five; but there were very strong practical objections to increasing the number to twelve. It would impose great additional burdens upon persons residing in our different country districts and large towns. He had never in his own experience heard of a case in which the mere fact of the jury being composed of five had in the least degree diminished the weight of the verdict of the jury. Cases under the Employers' Liability Act, for instance, involving very large sums were decided by juries of five, and he failed to see that the hon. Baronet had made out any case for increasing the number to twelve.

MR. CRIPPS (Lancashire, Stretford) agreed that there would be considerable inconvenience in increasing the number of jurors to twelve, and pointed out that very few, if any, County Courts had accommodation for so large a jury. It would be out of order to discuss the question of whether actions involving large sums should be tried in the High Court or in the County Court, but if they were to be tried in the County Court it would impose a heavy obligation on persons liable to serve on juries if the number of jurors were raised to twelve. It would be a different matter if some number between five and twelve were suggested, but he did not think the suggested number would be practicable.

MR. GRIFFITH BOSCAWEN recognised the practical difficulties which had been referred to, but thought there was a great deal in the contention that as the limit of the actions was being raised from £50 to £100 the number of jurors should be correspondingly increased. He suggested, as a compromise, that eight should be substituted for twelve.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT said that if the proposal was to be taken as evidence of a desire to meet the feeling of the House, he would not object to the clause being amended, but he thought the number should be an odd number.

LORD HUGH CECIL (Greenwich) moved the substitution of "nine" for "twelve." Most people were accustomed to think of a jury of twelve as one of the institutions of the country which was never departed from, but they had learnt this afternoon that that was not the case. It was one of the advantages of such debates that Members were instructed in these matters. But if actions involving sums of £100 were to be decided by juries of either five or nine, he really could not see why there should be a jury of twelve in any civil action whatever.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

> "To leave out the word 'twelve' in order to insert the word 'nine.'"—(*Lord Hugh Cecil.*)

SIR WILLIAM TOMLINSON said he would accept the Amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment as amended agreed to.

SIR WILLIAM TOMLINSON moved to omit Clause 4, which, he said, had been added by the Standing Committee. The Bill was described as one extending the jurisdiction of County Courts. Clause 4 had nothing whatever to do with extending the jurisdiction of County Courts, but had a great deal to do with the rights of suitors within those Courts. The clause raised the limit in the cases which might be heard by the registrar from £2 to £5, a provision which he thought would be liable to work prejudicially to the poorer suitors, who were entitled to have their cases tried by a Judge. There was no appeal from the decision of the registrar, consequently it was very necessary that the interests of the poorer suitors should be carefully watched.

Amendment proposed.

"To omit Clause 4."—(*Sir William Tomlinson.*)

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT said the essence of compromise was give and take. The supporters of the Bill had yielded on the last Amendment, and he hoped the hon. Baronet in return would not press the Amendment he had now moved. The clause was fully discussed in the Grand Committee, and its form as it stood in the Bill was the result of a compromise. The exigencies of time might compel him to accept the Amendment, but he would appeal to the hon. Baronet to concede the point.

Mr. GRIFFITH BOSCAWEN pointed out that the Amendment just accepted dealt with an entirely different subject from that now under discussion. If the extension proposed in this clause was agreed to there was no reason why at some future time the limit in the cases which might be tried before the registrar should not be further extended to £20, £50, or even £100, and just as the County Court Judge was now taking the place of the regular tribunal, so in a short time the County Court Judge might be superseded by the registrar.

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT: I will accept the Amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT moved that the Bill be read a third time, and appealed to the Solicitor-General to offer no opposition to the Motion, having regard to the numbers in the last division.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."—(*Sir Albert Rollit.*)

Sir William Tomlinson.

Sir EDWARD CARSON said it would be impossible at that stage, in a comparatively empty House, so to argue the matter so as to bring home to hon. Members the reasons why the Government thought the Bill unworkable. However, having made the protest that the Government considered the Bill unworkable, and that it would not be a useful addition to the Statute-book, he would not offer further obstacles.

Sir WILLIAM TOMLINSON expressed the belief that there would be much difficulty in the working of the Bill, and the hope that the measure would be carefully considered in its future stages.

Lord HUGH CECIL thought it was very unreasonable to press for the Third Reading of a Bill at the conclusion of a stage in which it had been substantially amended. The difficulty was not made at all less by the attitude of the Solicitor-General who had declared the Bill to be unworkable.

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT moved that the question be now put.

*Mr. SPEAKER said that under some circumstances he might have assented to the Motion, but it was hardly worth while to put the House to the trouble of two divisions when the Bill could be put down as the first order on Friday next, and a decision certainly obtained.

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT said he would not press the Motion.

Lord HUGH CECIL said his object was simply to protest against reading the Bill a third time at the end of a sitting in which it had been substantially amended, against the protests of people who were entitled to be heard in the matter, and without a proper opportunity for discussion.

And, it being half-past five of the clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Friday next.

Adjourned at twenty-seven minutes before Six o'clock till Monday next.

[APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

PUBLIC BILLS

DEALT WITH IN VOLUME CXXIII.

Those marked thus * are Government Bills. The figures in parentheses in the last column refer to the page in this volume. "[H.L.]" following title indicates that the Bill originated in the Lords.

(A.) HOUSE OF LORDS.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
*Bishoprics of Southwark and Birmingham [H.L.]	*Lord Belper*	Read 1^a 15th June (921)
*Board of Agriculture and Fisheries [H.L.]	*Earl of Onslow*	Read 1^a 11th June (620)
*Borough Funds	*Lord Kenyon*	Read 2^a 11th June (609)
Coal Mines (Certificates)		Committee 12th June (751) Report 18th June (1289) Read 3^a and passed 19th June (1419)
*County Councils (Bills in Parliament)	*Lord Kenyon*	Read 2^a 11th June (597)
*Education Borrowing	*Lord Kenyon*	Read 1^a 15th June (921)
*Justices of the Peace [H.L.]		Report 18th June (1289) Read 3^a and passed 19th June (419)
*Local Government (Transfer of Powers)		Read 1^a 11th June (619)
Musical Copyright [H.L.]	*Earl of Lytton*	Report 18th June (1289) Read 3^a and passed 19th June (1418)
Newcastle Chapter Amendment	*Lord Bishop of St. Albans*	Read 1^a 16th June (1040)
Polling Arrangements (Parliamentary Boroughs) [H.L.]		Report 11th June (689)
Polling Districts (County Councils) [H.L.]		Report 11th June (619)
Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Amendment) [H.L.]	*Lord Alverstone*	Report 11th June (619) Read 3^a and passed 12th June (751)

(A.) House of Lords—*continued.*

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress
Royal Declaration	*Earl Grey*	Read 1^a 18th June (1289)
*Statute Law Revision (Scotland) [H.L.]	*Lord Chancellor*	Report 16th June (1041) Read 3^a and passed 18th June (1289)
Union of Benefices Act, 1860, Amendment [H.L.]		Report 11th June (617) Read 3^a and passed 15th June (921)

(B.) House of Commons.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
*Bishopric of Bristol [H.L.]	*Mr. Akers Douglas*	Read 1^o 28th May (135)
*Congested Districts (Scotland) (No. 2)	*Mr. A. Graham Murray*	Read 1^o 15th June (955)
County Courts Jurisdiction Extension	*Sir Albert Rollit*	Consideration 19th June (1460)
Day Industrial Schools (Ireland	*Mr. Harrington*	Read 1^o 18th June (1324)
*Ecclesiastical Commissioners [H.L.]	*Mr. Akers Douglas*	Read 1^o 28th May (135)
*Education (Borrowing)	*Mr. Walter Long*	Committee 27th May (37) Report, Read 3^o and passed 12th June (830)
*Electric Lighting (London) [H.L.]	*Mr. Bonar Law*	Read 1^o 27th May (30)
Elementary Education Amendment	*Mr. Heywood Johnstone*	Read 3^o and passed 19th June (1431)
*Finance	*Mr. Ritchie*	Second Reading 9th June (330) (398) Second Reading 10th June (454) (533) Second Reading 12th June (760)
Guinea Postal Orders	*Mr. Henniker-Heaton*	Read 1^o 11th June (652) Read 2^o 16th June (1156)
*Irish Land	*Mr. Wyndham*	Committee 15th June (957) (1008) Committee 16th June (1060) (1125) Committee 17th June (1187) (1277)

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
Light Locomotives (Registration)	*Mr. Scott Montagu*	Read 1° 12th June (831)
Local Government (Transfer of Powers)	*Mr. Walter Long*	Consideration 27th May (55)
Marine Store Dealers (Ireland)	*Mr. Atkinson*	Read 2° 27th May (73) Committee 18th June (1403)
Married Women's Property Act (1882) Amendment	*Mr. Kimber*	Read 1° 27th May (30)
Medical Act (1858) Amendment	*General Laurie*	Bill withdrawn 27th May (30)
Medical Act (1886) Amendment	*General Laurie*	Bill withdrawn 27th May (30)
Medical Act (1886) Amendment (No. 2)	*General Laurie*	Read 1° 28th May (135)
*Metropolitan Improvements (Funds)	*Mr. Arthur Elliot*	Read 1° 27th May (30)
*Metropolitan Streets	*Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas*	Read 1° 9th June (329)
Outdoor Relief Pensioners	*Colonel Blundell*	Read 3° and passed 19th June (1453)
*Patent Office Extension	*Mr. Arthur Elliot*	Read 1° 27th May (30)
*Police Superannuation	*Mr. Cochrane*	Read 1° 9th June (329)
Prevention of Diseases (Fruit Trees)	*Sir James Rankin*	Bill withdrawn 11th June (740)
Public Offices (Dublin) Advances	*Mr. Arthur Elliot*	Committee 27th May (66)
*Railways (Electrical Powers) Expenses	*Mr. Gerald Balfour*	Committee 27th May (51)
Shops (No. 2)	*Sir Charles Dilke*	Read 1° 16th June (1060)
Small Holdings	*Mr. Jesse Collings*	Read 1° 10th June (454)
*Sugar Convention	*Mr. Bonar Law*	Read 1° 28th May (135)
Town Councils (Scotland)	*Mr. Asher*	Read 1° 27th May (30)
Trade Marks (Cotton Wares)	*Sir Wm. Houldsworth*	Read 1° 9th June (329)
Union of Benefices Act (1860) Amendment [H.L.]	*Sir Wm. Houldsworth*	Read 1° 17th June (1187)

APPENDIX II.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, SESSION 1903.

List of Rules, Orders, &c., which have been presented during the Session, and are required by Statute to lie for an appointed number of Days upon the Table of the House.

[In continuation of List given in previous volume.]

Title of Paper.	Date from which the Period runs.	Period to lie upon the Table.
Education (Scotland),—Copy of Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, dated 28th May, 1903, providing for the distribution of the General Aid Grant (with Explanatory Memorandum) [35 and 36 Vic., c. 62, s. 67]	28 May	One month
Intermediate Education (Ireland),—Copy of Rule made by the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland appointing the places at which the Examinations for 1903 shall be held [41 & 42 Vic. c. 66, s. 6]	8 June	40 days
Irish Land Commission (Rules),—Copy of Rule made by the Irish Land Commission as to Assistant Commissioners, dated the 18th May, 1903 [44 and 45 Vic., c. 49, s. 50 (3)]	8 June	100 sitting days
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Victoria,—Copy of the Constitution Amendment Act, 1903 [13 and 14 Vic., c. 59, s. 32]	8 June	30 days

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[AUTHORISED EDITION].

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